









English Literature for Secondary Schools  
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## TALES FROM INDIAN HISTORY

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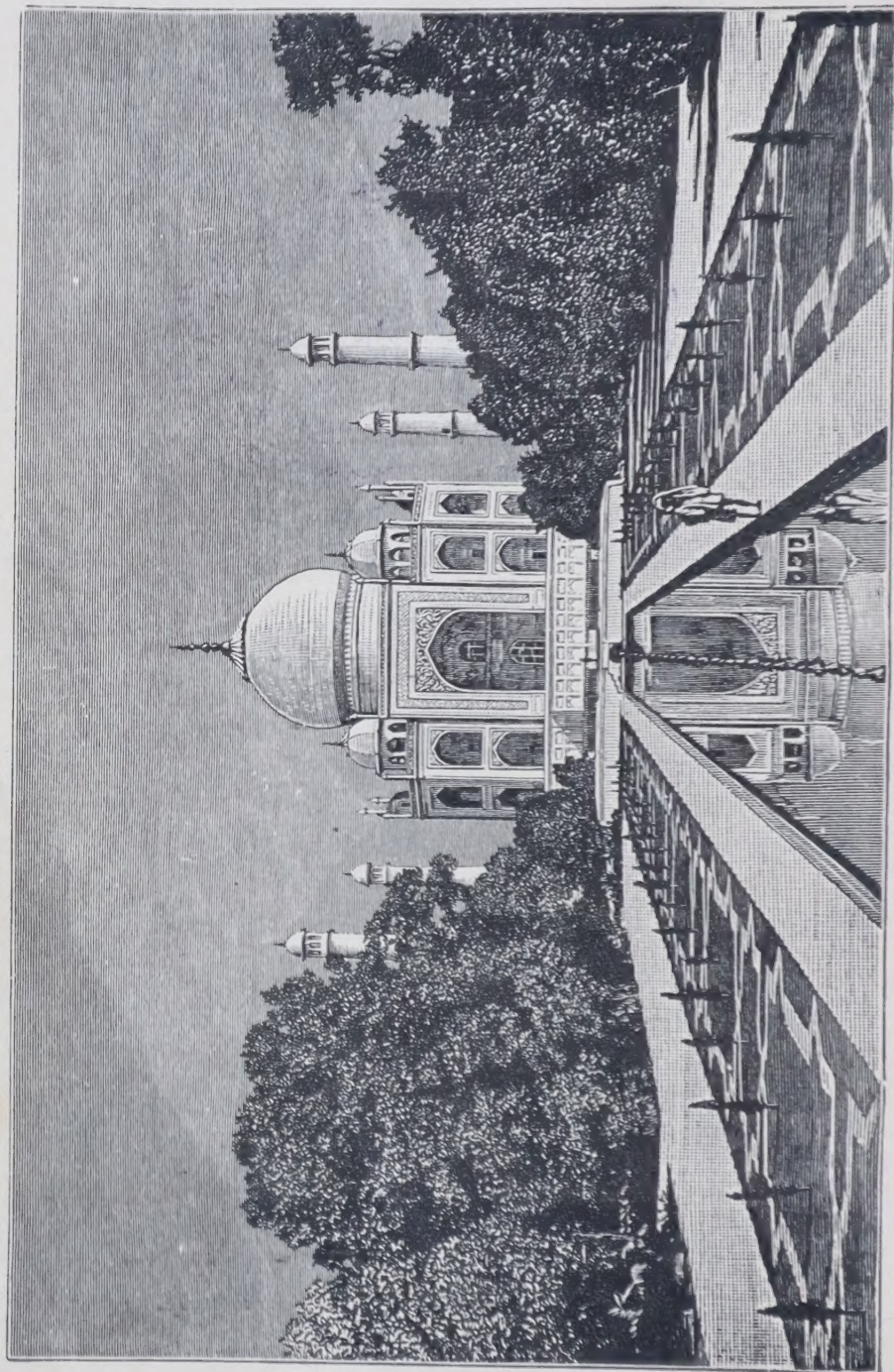
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TORONTO









# Tales from Indian History



*With Introduction, Notes, etc., by*

A. S. Roe

Author of "Stories from Chinese History," etc.

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## INTRODUCTION

THE main incidents of these stories have been culled from histories of India, and are therefore either true or, at anyrate, what Napoleon called history, "fables that have been agreed upon."

Those who read for themselves the annals from which these tales are taken, will realise something of the difficulties that surrounded the rulers of India when that great country was made up of warring states.

Down through the ages from the days of Gautama the founder of Buddhism, who gave up a throne to search for truth, and lived as a hermit, teaching the 'Law of Piety, some of the most famous names in the history of the world are to be found in India.

There was Asoka the Humane (B.C. 272-232), who faithfully carried out his motto, "Work I must for the good of all"; and King Vakramadita (A.D. 375-413), who seems to have combined all the qualities of a great ruler; and Harsha (606-648), the conqueror and the poet, who showed such self-sacrificing devotion in his lonely quest.

Later on we come to the warlike tribes beyond the Himalaya Mountains, who felt supreme contempt for the idolatry of the Hindus and knew nothing of the gentle religion of Gautama, but professed to follow the teachings of the prophet Mohammed, and were ever seeking to conquer fresh territory under guise of a 'Holy War.'

In course of time their armies swept down upon India, under the leadership of Mahmud of Ghazni. His attack on

the temple of the 'Moon-Lord' took place on one of the last of these victorious expeditions.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century the Moham-medan invaders settled down in India, and a Mohammedan king sat upon the throne of Delhi.

Ala-ud-din, the Afghan (1296-1316), made many successful conquests. After the princess of Chitor had paid him back in his own coin, he tried again and yet again to seize the coveted fortress, and in the end—in spite of the splendid heroism of its defenders—his wish was fulfilled. Before his death, however, the fort was retaken by its rightful owners, and the king, when he heard the news, "bit his own flesh with fury."

Baber, the Lion (1526-1530), was also a Mohammedan, but a Mongol, and a descendant of the famous Tamerlane, "the Scourge of Asia." He was a man of much finer character than Ala-ud-din, but he again was outshone by his grandson, Akbar the Great, one of the most famous emperors who ever lived. It is in the reign of Akbar that the heroic Queen Regent of Ahmenagar stands out in the bright light of fame. Akbar was the first of the 'Great Moguls.' The splendour of the Mogul court was renowned far and near. In the days of Akbar's son, Jehangir, and of his successor, Shah Jehan, it became more magnificent than ever.

Shah Jehan's mother and grandmother had been Rajput princesses. He was therefore more of a Hindu by descent than a Mongol. His beautiful wife was a Persian, and it was for her that Shah Jehan built the celebrated 'Taj of Agra,' the most superb tomb in the whole world. His son Aurangzeb was the last of the 'Great Moguls.' Those who succeeded him were still Mogul emperors, and sat on the throne of Delhi, but none of them were *great*.

As the Mohammedan power waned, that of the Mahrattas, who were Hindus, waxed stronger and stronger. Sivaji, the founder of the Mahratta kingdoms, had been a thorn



in the side of Aurangzeb and his generals, who however never succeeded in crushing the 'mountain rat.' Through the years that followed the Mahrattas became the leading power in India, and remained so for nearly a hundred years. Originally a limited area south of Bombay comprised the sole Mahratta country, but bit by bit their dominions extended through the central provinces from the west to the east coast of India. Mahratta wars were going on more or less all the time, first against the Moguls and then against the English, to whom in 1804 they owed their final defeat.

"The British won India," says Sir William Hunter, "not from the Moguls but from the Hindus."

In the days of the Mogul emperors the Sikhs in the Punjab first began to give trouble. They were Hindus who had turned from the Hindu idols to worship the One and Only God. The sayings of their founder and other spiritual teachers are inscribed in the 'Grunth' or 'Holy Book,' which is held in great reverence by every pious Sikh. The most magnificent and most important of all the Sikh temples is the 'Golden Temple' in the 'City of the Pool of Immortality' (Amritsar). Its walls are of copper plated with gold, and the doors are of shining silver.

In the early days of their existence the Sikhs were a quiet, religious sect; but, stung into action by the persecution of two of the Mogul emperors, they became a powerful military confederacy, composed of a number of chiefdoms which were constantly fighting the one against the other whenever they happened to be at peace with the common foe.

Thus Jassa Singh and Sada Kour were both Sikhs; but Jassa Singh had made an enemy of Sada Kour, who thereupon seized the first opportunity to march into Jassa Singh's territory with her armies. Ranjit Singh, her son-in-law, took part in this ill-fated expedition,\* but at that time he was little more than a boy.

Soon after that, however, he began to give proof of his undoubted ability as a ruler of men. During his lifetime the Sikhs became a great power in the north of India, extending their territories even into Kashmir. Ranjit Singh had been sufficiently wise to keep on good terms with the British; but after his death the Sikhs, proud of their military strength, invaded British India. It was not until the end of the second Sikh war (1848) that these fierce warriors of the Punjab were finally defeated. Many of them had been drilled by Italian and French officers, employed by the far-seeing Ranjit Singh, and were the best Indian troops of the day. They have proved their worth time and time again in more recent history, fighting side by side with their former enemies, the British.

## THE KING'S QUEST

It was the eighth day of the second moon, in the royal city of Thanoswar, and a great 'tamasha' (festival) was being held. All who could had sallied forth to see the wonderful procession, and the greater number were clad in holiday attire. So gay were the colours worn, and so white were the flowing draperies, that here and there, where the throng was thickest, it seemed as though handfuls of summer flowers had been scattered amongst drifts of snow. There were turbans the deep orange of marigolds, or the magenta red of a fox-glove, there were 'sarees' the rose pink of geraniums, and scarves as blue as mountain forget-me-nots, or as scarlet as flaming poppies. Now and then, a touch of glittering gold embroidery or a shower of silver stars covered the black tresses of some beautiful maiden, whose dark eyes peeped forth shyly from a partly veiled face.

Though the people had come out to enjoy themselves, they did not look especially gay. They moved slowly, and seldom smiled. Some of the men held hands like shy children, and the children with their little grave faces kept close beside their elders and hardly uttered a word.



At all events there were many wonderful things to see. The festival, or as they called it, the 'tamasha,' was in honour of a great teacher<sup>1</sup> who had lived and died ever so many years ago, but to whose memory even the king did homage. The shining golden image, mounted on a superb elephant, under a canopy of embroidered silk, was called a 'Buddha.' There were many other elephants in the procession, war elephants in magnificent trappings, and numbers of wheeled cars, carrying gaudily painted towers that looked like tiny pagodas. As they passed, the people scattered on the sacred ground flowers made of gold and silver and precious pearls: not that the great teacher had ever cared for such things, for they belonged to a world from which he had striven to cut himself adrift. At last the procession came to an end: and as the daylight died, lamps were lit in every quarter, and from almost every house strains of music and other sounds of revelry were heard. In the midst of it all some horsemen rode into the city, weary and travel-stained, for they had ridden far and had not rested day or night.

"They have brought bad news," it was whispered. Before night-fall there were many who knew what the bad news was about. The wicked King of Malwa had taken captive a princess of Thaneswar, and had slain her husband. The King of Thaneswar was beside himself with anger, for the princess was his only sister whom he and his brother Harsha loved dearly. "They have put her in prison like a brigand's wife, with a pair of iron fetters kissing her feet," he

<sup>1</sup>Gautama, the founder of Buddhism.

exclaimed ; and before many days were past, he had started forth with a great troop of horsemen to fight against his enemy, the King of Malwa, and to obtain the release of the royal captive. Soon the news came back, that he had fought and conquered, but alas ! in the very moment of triumph, deceived by one whom he had foolishly allowed himself to trust, he had been suddenly attacked and put to death.

In the city of Thaneswar this second tragedy filled the hearts of the people with sorrow. And what then had become of the princess ? She had escaped, so the messenger said ; but no one knew whither she had fled or what would now happen to her, a lone fugitive in an unfriendly country.

Harsha had now become King of Thaneswar in the place of his dead brother ; but Harsha could not rest, until he had found his unhappy sister and had rescued her from danger. So now once more the royal city of Thaneswar was left without a king, and Harsha set out on his long journey, a journey of which he knew not the end.

Save for a few faithful followers he went alone, for thus, so it seemed to him, he would be more likely to find the lonely wanderer. He journeyed from place to place, and all he could learn was that the princess, when she escaped, had fled with a few of her most devoted attendants to the wild jungle forests amongst the Vindhya mountains. His heart sank when he thought of the dangers of these forests, the fierce tigers, the poisonous snakes and all the terrors of a jungle.

Day after day he sought for traces of human beings in those wild regions and could find none. At last,

one day, he came upon a trodden path, and knew that footsteps, and not a few of them, had passed that way before him. He went on more hopefully now, and as night came on he could see the light of a fire burning brightly amongst the trees. "At last," he thought, "my search is to be rewarded."

As he drew nearer, he could hear voices, and called her name, the name of the dearly loved sister, whom, he had begun to fear, he should never see again. But there was no answer; and in another moment he knew that he had been mistaken, and that the voices he had heard were the voices of men who were speaking in a language that he did not understand. At all events he would go up to them and find out if they could tell him anything. He pressed on, and pushing aside the bushes came out into the open space where the fire was burning. Were these men or monkeys who were gathered round the blazing logs? By the light of the flames he could see the dark wizened faces of creatures who hardly looked like men—some of them were dwarfs and all of them were shrivelled and ugly. Then, in a moment, he guessed that they were Jungle-folk. At first they were frightened at the sight of their strange visitors, but, fortunately, one of the king's attendants could speak in a language that they understood. He it was who explained their errand and who, bit by bit, found out that these Jungle-folk had themselves, but a short time before, seen the princess, and thought they knew whereabouts she could be found. But one, wiser than the rest, said: "Nay, for she was dead, or would be dead by morning dawn."



More than that he would not say. Then Harsha full of fear of — he knew not what — offered the Jungle-folk gold coins in plenty, if they would but show him the way to the place where they thought the princess could be found.

Thus they travelled through the night, bearing flaming torches to frighten the wild beasts who roam through the forests at night-time in search of prey : but they made slow progress, for the path went in and out through the heart of the jungle and was hard to find. The sun was rising as they neared the end of their journey, and a wailing cry, " Hae hae ! " uttered by women's voices made Harsha quicken his pace. The trees were no longer so thick, and beyond them, in an open tract of grass land, he could see something dark and high piled up in the centre. One or two figures, the figures of women in white garments, were moving slowly to and fro. At first he was too far off to see what they were doing, but he could hear more plainly than ever the wailing cry : " Hae hae ! " He hurried on. What if he should arrive too late—too late to save that dearly loved sister from a tragic death ? For now he knew beyond a doubt that the dark pile of grass and wood was nothing more nor less than a funeral pyre. Already he fancied he could see the princess herself moving slowly to her death, of her own free will to cast herself into the flames, as so many widows did in those days, foolishly fancying that in this way alone they could faithfully obey the call of duty.

He could see her more clearly now. She clasped a pair of sandals to her breast—the sandals of her

dead husband, and stood erect before the awesome pile of faggots which were already bursting into flame. Then suddenly she started back with a loud cry, for a voice that she had not heard for many a long day called out to her from afar—"Bahin Bahin! (sister, sister!)."

"'Tis Harsha," she said. "Harsha my brother, I had given thee up for dead." And stumbling forward she fell as though lifeless before the funeral pile.

The day came when the people of the royal city of Thaneshwar flocked forth once more in gay holiday attire to see a procession pass. This time it was no gilded image of Buddha that they went out to see, but their beloved princess and her brother the king.

"Ah," said the princess, in the joy of the home-coming, "let us live happily for evermore and overcome anger by love and evil by good." These were words that had been spoken by the great teacher, whose wise sayings the princess studied diligently from day to day.





THE CITY OF THE SUN.



## IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS

THE people who lived in the 'City of the Sun'<sup>1</sup> many hundreds of years ago, in the reign of the good King Avantivarman, dwelt in one of the happiest regions of the world. The city had been built on the shores of a winding river, in a green valley tucked in amongst snow-crowned heights. Men called the valley an 'emerald set in pearls,' and so healthy was it in those good old days that it was said that the people who lived there had, like the crows, only one ailment to dread and that ailment was old age.

There were many beautiful houses in the river-side city, and, as they were fond of saying, "Those who beheld them for the first time bit the finger of astonishment with the teeth of admiration." It was a land of good things, of lovely flowers and delicious fruits, and the fruit was so plentiful that one could eat as much as one liked without paying anything for it, and as there were no walls and no hedges, the people who had no gardens of their own, could walk in and out of their neighbours' gardens, and seldom, if ever, did the owners object.

In the emerald valley the sun shone mildly, it

<sup>1</sup> Srinagar.

was rarely too hot to be pleasant. On the river banks grew violets and many other flowers, and on the roofs of the houses blood red tulips and purple irises.

But year after year of late the beautiful winding river had become a source of trouble and distress to the people who lived at the lower end of the emerald valley.

A day's journey from the 'City of the Sun,' the river left the valley and entered the dark gorges. From a swiftly flowing stream it turned into a raging torrent, foaming down the mountain side and flinging up clouds of angry spray as it rushed onwards, in and out, dashing over and under and in between great rocky boulders, which through the years had fallen in, one on top of the other blocking the way. In the spring time when the snow melted on the heights around, the water in the river grew higher and higher, till at last, hindered in its downward course by the fallen boulders, it flowed angrily over the banks and flooded the fields of the peasants in the 'emerald valley.'

One year the floods had been higher than ever; and the king, who was a very good king, and was distressed when his people were in trouble, gave orders that something must be done to prevent the river from overflowing its banks.

He asked the great Suyva to suggest something. Suyva was a scholar; he understood many matters of which the common people knew nothing, and all the people in the city thought much of the ability of Suyva. Had he not built some wonderful bridges

and made a magnificent road where no one had ever thought of making a road before ? But Suyya did not seem so certain that he could do anything to prevent the big river from overflowing its banks. He shook his head and said, " It would be easier for a string of camels to pass through a needle's eye."

Still he agreed to do what he could, and day after day he used to go to the entrance of the dark gorges and watch the angry water splashing up against the rocks and the stones, and sometimes rolling them over in mad hurry to get past. At last the day came when he returned to the ' City of the Sun ' and sent word to the king that he, Suyya, had thought of a way by which they might prevent another flood the following year, but he feared that it would cost a great deal of money.

" It matters not," said the king. " Let Suyya have all the silver that he needs."

Then Suyya asked for copper as well as silver, and filled so many sacks with the money that he needed both men and mules to carry them to the river-side.

There was much foolish talk in the ' emerald valley ' as to what Suyya was going to do with all that money. One who thought he knew more than his neighbours said that perhaps it was to be given to Nāga and his wife Nāgin, the water demons who, with many of their kind, are said to live in wonderful fairy palaces, far down in that hidden world that is supposed to exist below the rivers of India.

" But they have no need of money," said another. " for it is well known that their palaces are stored with both gold and jewels. They have treasures of

which we know nothing. We should never have had these fields of purple saffron, which bring so much money to the grower, had it not been for that one precious bulb."

"Aie ?" asked one. "How then was it that a water-demon presented our country with a saffron bulb ?"

"It was a Nag, they say, that had nearly gone blind with sore eyes, who came to see one of our court physicians, who took him at first sight to be a man ; but when he found that he could not cure him, he suddenly noticed that he was not a man but a water-demon, and that something that was poisonous and bad came out of his mouth, and injured his eyes. So then he covered the eyes with a cloth, and after that the Nāg got well again and was so grateful that he gave the physician a bulb of saffron. No one had ever heard of saffron before that."

"That is foolish talk," said one who had stayed to listen. "There are no such things as Nāgs, and those who go to the river by the dark gorges to morrow at sunrise will see for themselves how the great Suyya intends to use the money."

On the morrow at sunrise everyone who could get so far flocked to the river-side, a day's journey from the 'City of the Sun.' Many travelled down the river by boat—strange hooded boats like Noah's arks in shape, and the boatmen, most of whom live on their boats, and have no other home, are fond of boasting that they are the descendants of Noah !

So vast was the crowd, that for many it was difficult to see everything that went on, but there



were some who pressed in close to the water's edge, and they passed back word to those in the rear. Suyya, standing on the top of a jutting-out cliff, was flinging out the money in handfuls into the very middle of the stream. Some of it was copper, but most of it was silver. It tumbled on the rocks and under the rocks, and Suyya shouted to the people to plunge into the torrent and pick up the coins for themselves; they willingly did what he said, and still he went on throwing till the river seemed almost as full of men as of rocks. They tore up the boulders, thrust aside the stones, and rolled over rocks that had stood there for years, in their mad haste to possess themselves of the money. Still Suyya went on throwing in his handfuls, flinging them skilfully in places where it was not easy to reach, and still fresh swimmers plunged into the water and clambered over the wet slippery boulders, and dived into the pools, and now and then a number of them together hurled the big rocks out of the way of the stream.

Suyya smiled; for, when the last sack of money had been emptied, he could see that the main bed of the river was no longer barred by a wall of fallen rocks

"Next year," he said, "there will be no floods," and Suyya was right.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In these days the work is done by electric dredgers.

## THE MOON-LORD

For many years past, the people had come from all parts of India to do homage to the Moon lord. The Hindu temple in which the great idol was enshrined was one of the finest temples in the land and one of the richest. From the white walls, shaded by giant trees on the hill-sides, flights of marble steps led down to the blue waters of the Arabian sea. The priests used to tell the wondering pilgrims that the waters of the sea rose and fell, bowing low in never ceasing homage to the great Moon-lord.

But the day came when the priests were far too worried and upset to imagine stories about the sea or tell them to the pilgrims. In fact, very few pilgrims had climbed the marble steps of late. Those who had come had all brought the same startling piece of news. The King Mahmud, they said, the dreaded king of Afghánistan, was marching south with a big army, a bigger army than he had ever had before, and he was even then on his way across the great desert and intended to seize the temple of the Moon-lord and all the wealth of the land.

"I have no fear," said one old priest who had been there many years. "Fifteen times and more has this

Mahmud marched down upon India, from his northern land, plundering even as a robber, but never once has he come as far as this. It would be folly indeed to bring a great army through the desert of Sind."

But the next messenger to arrive brought further news. He had come from the royal city itself, where preparations were on foot to defend the kingdom against the enemy. The king had got together a great army. The women had sold their jewels and melted down their gold ornaments to provide arms for the soldiers, and princes from all the country round were coming in with more troops.

"But," the traveller added in a lower tone, "rumour says that Mahmud has made a vow that he will seize the temple of the Moon-lord, for he has heard of the great wealth that is stored within its walls."

"Yet," answered one who was standing by, "it is said that his wealth is so great already that his greyhounds, of which he has more than four hundred, wear collars set with jewels and coats fringed with pearls."

"Be he rich or poor, it matters not," said the old priest; "he will never succeed in robbing the Moon-lord. The walls of the temple are strong and the Moon lord is powerful. But," he asked again, "how will Mahmud bring his great army across the desert of Sind?"

"Who knows?" replied the messenger. "It is said that many are dying of thirst and that some have gone raving mad in the terrible heat, but that once Mahmud has made up his mind he never changes it."

and moreover that he has enough men and to spare."

"The Moon-lord will not suffer his temple to be destroyed," said the old priest, and, sighing contentedly, he gazed at the placid waters of the sea.

But the rest of the occupants of the temple set to work with all speed to prepare for a possible siege.

It was none too soon, for Mahmud and his army marched through the land as he had often marched before through other parts of India, conquering, killing and destroying, and carrying off all the wealth on which he could lay hands. Men who had come out to fight turned back in terror and fled before him. One, a friend of the old priests on the hillside by the sea, brought the news of the capture of the royal city to the temple of the Moon-lord.

"There is no time to be lost," he cried, "for the Afghan king is even now marching with all speed to seize the temple."

"The walls are strong and the Moon-lord is powerful. The armies of the Afghan shall be defeated," said the old priest.

"The priest's words are true words," answered the people, and they fell on their faces before the great idol.

Before another day had passed, the Afghan army was surrounding the temple on every side save that on which the marble steps led down to the water's edge.

A herald sent by the priests proclaimed, so that many could hear his words, that the great Moon-lord would and could vanquish every foe who dared to attack the sacred temple.



For two long days the priests behind the fortified walls fought bravely, and princes from the country round brought their troops to help defend the temple.

On the third day Mahmud the Afghan began to think he might be defeated after all. He sprang from his horse and cast himself upon the ground calling on Allah and his prophet. With wild shrieks, his men, seeing their leader on his knees in prayer, rushed forward sweeping all before them, battering down the Hindu soldiers round the temple walls, and bursting like a flood through the gates that fell before their blows.

"Khuda-hé, Khuda-hé," they cried. ("There is a God !")

"The Moon-lord, the Moon-lord," shouted the old priest, shaking in every limb. He stood in the darkened inner temple before the precious image. The other priests gathered round him, for they had thought of a plan by which their idol could be saved. When at last King Mahmud strode in upon them, the old priest came forward tremblingly and offered a great sum of money to the invader, if he would but leave them the image of the Moon-lord.

But King Mahmud<sup>1</sup> answered scornfully : "Nay, I am no seller of idols but a breaker of idols." And raising his iron club, he smashed the image in two with one tremendous blow.

For a moment it seemed as though blood streamed out upon the floor, but it was not so, for the Moon-lord was made of gilded wood and nothing more. Those deep red drops were no drops of blood, but great

<sup>1</sup> Mahmud, 1027 A.D.

crimson rubies of untold value, that had been stored away inside the idol. No wonder that it is written in the pages of Indian history that the wealth which Mahmud the Afghan found in that temple of the Hindus was more than any royal treasury had ever before contained. As to the priests, when they saw that their idol was broken and their treasure gone, they crept away down the steps to the boats, and escaped to a place of safety on the other side of the water.

## THE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS

IN the royal palace of Anhalwara a strange silence reigned. Now and then a white-robed figure glided swiftly across the marble court with noiseless steps and disappeared. From behind a lattice-work of carved stone a serving woman peeped cautiously from time to time.

"All is quiet," she said, speaking her thoughts aloud. "May there be no cause for fear!"

"You are sure the princess is safe?" came an anxious question in a voice that trembled.

"Quite sure, your Majesty," answered the serving woman, turning respectfully towards a silken divan in the shadowy background, on which the beautiful Queen Kumala lay with closed eyes and a look of suffering on her face.

"They say that the King Ala-ud-din whose armies are laying waste our land is one of the cruellest rulers who ever sat upon the throne of Delhi," murmured the queen. "The old king was as a father to him and loved him as his son; yet this wicked Ala-ud-din had no gratitude in his heart, but slew the old man with his own hand, so that he himself might rule over the land."

"Hae Hae," exclaimed the old serving woman. "What will become of us all, if we fall into his hands? He is as full of treachery as a spider."

"But the child, the princess, is safe?" asked the queen once more.

"Aie Aie. Long before this she will be in the home of Hussain the merchant, many miles from the city."

"That is well, that is well," sighed the queen, and the sigh was one of relief.

Before many days had passed, the dreaded army of the King of Delhi had entered the city gates. Few shots were fired, for most of the soldiers of the city had fled in terror, following the steps of their royal master the king, who, unknown even to Queen Kumala, had beaten a hasty retreat not long after the departure of the little princess; for he knew that the Afghan armies were all powerful and were already in possession of the greater part of his kingdom.

In the palace the serving woman wrung her hands, and wept bitterly; for in the queen's apartments no one now lay on the silken divan, room after room was stripped bare and empty. The soldiers had carried off not only all the treasures they could find, but had taken captive the beautiful queen, deserted, as she was, in her hour of need by all but some of her faithful serving women.

Devala Devi, the daughter of the queen, was known to be one of the most beautiful princesses in the land. She was also a very lovable one; and the merchant's wife, who had taken her into her own home as one of her own daughters when the armies



of the King of Delhi were marching on the royal city, grew very fond of her august visitor. She felt very sorry for her, for on that one terrible day the princess had lost not only her home in the palace but both her father and her mother : the king had fled, they knew not whither, and the poor queen had been taken captive by the soldiers.

The princess however found life in the merchant's family not a little wearisome. The merchant never allowed his wife or his daughters to go beyond the mud walls and the high wooden gates of their home. Day after day, year after year, they had lived in the same square-topped flat-roofed house looking on to the same walled-in courtyards. When the weather was cold they sat indoors on rugs spread upon the floor, chewing betel nuts wrapped in leaves. When the weather was warm they sat out in the courtyard amongst the chickens and the children, unless the heat were very great indeed, and then they went indoors again, for it was cooler indoors than out.

The princess soon got tired of this kind of life. She desired above all things to go and see the famous cave-temples of Ellora, which, she knew, were not very far away.

"Ah bah," exclaimed the merchant's wife, "it would be folly indeed to go a journey in these days."

"But it is only a short distance," said the princess.

"Short or long, it matters not : the robbers are everywhere, and where there are no robbers, there are soldiers who are even more to be feared than the robbers."

"I fear neither the one nor the other," the princess

answered proudly, "and to the temple of Ellora I mean to go."

Both the merchant and his wife tried to persuade her to give up the idea, but the princess would not listen to their advice. She very foolishly thought that, being a princess, she ought to be allowed to do exactly what she liked, but she soon found out her mistake. At last the day came when she set out on the road to the cave-temples. She travelled in a palankeen behind closely drawn curtains, so that none might see her face. The merchant had provided her with a strong escort to protect her from the dangers of the road.

They soon left the mud walls of the village behind them. It was a glorious day in early spring. The road passed through fields of wheat dotted with clusters of date palms. Bright-winged parrots flashed from bough to bough, and now and then a sleek brown mongoose slipped past seeking cover.

They were but a few miles distant from the cave-temples when the princess heard the sound of horses galloping towards them : and as they drew near, the loud voices of their riders filled her with fear, for their words were uttered in a language that was strange to her and were followed by the clash of swords.

Her bearers set down the palankeen upon the ground and fled away as fast as their feet would carry them. The princess, peeping through the curtains, could see that these were no highway robbers who had attacked them, but armed soldiers who were more in number than her escort and far more powerful

men. But the night did not last long, for not only the bearers of the palankeen had fled, but one by one others of her attendants were following in their wake. Save for those who were lying wounded on the ground, the princess was left alone, surrounded by a troop of soldiers whom now she knew to belong to the army of the dreaded King of Delhi. Huge rough fellows they were, but to her at least they behaved courteously.

Few words however could she understand, but one thing was certain—she and her maidens were to be taken as captives to Ala-ud-din in his palace at Delhi. The heart of the princess grew heavy within her, for she had heard that he was one of the cruellest kings who had ever lived.

How often she longed to be back behind the mud walls in the peaceful courtyard with the merchant's family! Day after day they journeyed on their way to the northern city, and she trembled with fear when she thought of the cruel king, and wept with sorrow when she remembered her old home in the royal palace and those whom she would never see again.

She was feeling sick and sad when at last they arrived at the great city of Ala-ud-din. The palankeen was set down, and her maidens, gathering round her, helped her to alight. She passed, like one who saw nothing, through a marble courtyard glittering like snow in the sunshine, and allowed herself to be led into the cool and dimly lit royal apartments where—so her maidens whispered—the ladies of the court were awaiting them.

The rooms however were empty and the princess

sank in weariness on a divan and buried her face in her hands. Through the carved marble screen, as delicate as lace and of the colour of ivory, at one end of the marble hall, eager eyes had caught sight of the weeping girl, who sat trembling and expecting every instant to hear the voice of the dreaded monarch. No doubt he would treat her as his slave and use her cruelly.

She could hear a footstep approaching, but she dared not look up. She shivered in every limb, her heart beat loudly, and every moment the footstep was coming nearer.

In despair, she raised her head and her dark eyes were like those of a hunted animal. Then with a cry—not of terror but of joy—she sprang to meet the figure that was coming towards her and entwined her arms around her neck, for it was none other than Kumala Devi, her dearly loved mother, whom she never thought to see again.

As time went on the beautiful princess fell in love ; and one day there was a gay wedding in the royal palace at Delhi when Ala-ud-din, who was never cruel to the princess, gave her in marriage to his son the prince.



## THE MYSTERIOUS WARRIOR

AKBAR THE GREAT had become the ruler over the larger part of the north of India. He had conquered state after state and, more often than not, had been able to make friends with those who were once his enemies. The people all spoke in praise of their king. He was so strong, so brave, so handsome, so humane, and his wisdom was great. They used to repeat his wise sayings. One saying in particular they were not likely to forget; for by the king's orders the words had been stamped on pieces of money in use throughout the country.

“To do right is the way to please God.

Those who walk in the straight path, have I never seen lost.”

Although the great Akbar ruled over so much of the land, there still remained kingdoms in the south that had not been conquered. One of these was a little kingdom not very far from Bombay. A great army, led by one of Akbar's sons, marched down from the north to seize the royal city, for it was known that the nobles within its walls could not agree together, and were making much trouble. Besides which, the sultan was a mere child, and the city, so

thought Akbar the king, would soon fall into the hands of his son, the prince.

"True," said one of the prince's advisers, "the sultan is but a babe and of small account, yet I have heard say that the city is ruled by one who is powerful indeed."

"Bāk bāk," exclaimed the prince. "You are speaking of the sultana, Chand Bibi, as they call her."

"Even so: she is, as your Highness knows, the aunt of the sultan, and the queen regent of the city, and it is said that she has been able to make peace, not only amongst the nobles, who were at strife together, but with the King of Bijapur, who is now her friend, whereas he was once her enemy."

"It matters not how powerful she is," said the prince. "she is but a woman. The armies of Akbar are not likely to suffer defeat."

But the prince did not find his task quite as easy as he expected. At last however the soldiers who were defending the walls of the city so bravely began to give way: many had fallen, and few came to take the place of those who had gone.

Suddenly a great shout of triumph from the attacking troops struck terror into the hearts of those who heard it. The terrible tidings soon spread through the city, that in one luckless spot at least, the wall had fallen in where there were no soldiers to defend the gap that had been made. But in this they were wrong: for the news was quickly passed from one to another that the breach in the wall—it was but a narrow breach—was being bravely held by a warrior in shining armour—a saint, said some, an

angel, said others, one of the great nobles, said a third. "Nay," said those who had seen the warrior with their own eyes, "there is some mystery about him. His armour shines like silver; but it is nothing, they say, to the dazzling glory of his face, which few have ever seen."

"Hast thou seen it then thyself?" asked one.

The speaker shook his head.

"He stands with drawn sword in his hand and over his face hangs a thick veil."

"'Tis a magic sword," said another, "for many have entered into combat with the warrior, and one and all have fallen dead or wounded."

All through the day the battle raged, but Akbar's soldiers were losing courage, and the fear of that magic sword was upon them. At night-fall the order went forth to retreat, but still it seemed to them that the figure in shining armour stood as ever guarding the narrow way.

It was too dark for them however to observe those who came and went, fetching and carrying, building and hammering all through the black hours of the night; but when the day dawned it was seen that the breach in the wall had been repaired, and he who had defended it so bravely was still visible, standing there mute and motionless, holding the magic sword and waiting for the foe. But that foe never came, for the prince sent an embassy instead to make terms of peace: it appeared that he had given up all thoughts of taking the city by force of arms.

While the citizens both laughed and cried with joy, there were not a few that still wondered who the

veiled warrior could be to whom alone the victory was due. He had come from the palace, it was said, and had gone back to the palace again when all was over.

An old man—one of the palace attendants—lingered a moment by a group of men, who were all talking eagerly about the soldier in the shining armour.

"Ah, Jemna Das," they said, seeing the old man, "tell us what you know."

Jemna Das smiled and answered slowly as was his way: "The brave defender of our city-wall was no soldier but a woman, who——"

"A woman!"

"Her face was veiled, so that none might see her," said Jemna Das, "but——"

"Yes, that we know. But a woman! What courage! What skilful use of the sword! None has ever seen the like."

"Surely our great queen regent will reward her handsomely," said another.

"Our queen regent will not reward her in any way whatever. She ——" began Jemna Das.

"Not reward her?"

"The queen regent sees no reason why she should be rewarded, for——" began Jemna Das again.

"But we citizens think differently," cried one.

"You do not give me time to speak," said Jemna Das. "I was only going to tell you that the mysterious warrior was none other than Chand Bibi herself, our ever-glorious queen regent."

And so astonished were they all that they stared at the old man in speechless wonder.



The name of Chand Bibi is still famous in the annals of Indian history, but alas ! when the armies of the great King Akbar came a second time to capture her royal city, the brave warrior in the shining armour was no longer there to fight the foe. Those who should have been her friends had, through disloyalty and crime, brought about her death.

It was not long however before they one and all suffered the punishment that they deserved. When the city fell into the hands of the enemy, Chand Bibi's murderers were cut to pieces by the soldiers of Akbar the Great.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Akbar, A.D. 1556-1605.

## VI

### THE BITER BIT

DAY after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, the great army of the King of Delhi had besieged one of the most famous fortresses of Rajputana : but though their enemies had surrounded them for nearly twelve years, the raja and his faithful followers were still fairly hopeful that Ala-ud-din, the King of Delhi, would never succeed in capturing their fort. But Ala-ud-din wanted to capture the raja's wife, the beautiful princess, far more than the fort. It was for this reason that he had first brought his army from the north in order to fight the raja, and little did he think, when he first came, that twelve long years would go by, to find his soldiers still in the same place, still encamped on the wide sandy plain at the foot of the steep grey cliffs, crowned by the massive walls of the great fortress which towered above their heads in lonely grandeur.

The camp had been there so long, that it seemed almost more like a city than a camp, and was divided into squares and streets and little alley ways, streets of booth-like shops and streets of tents. To those who peeped out warily from the distant windows of

the fort it was a city of many colours, for every tent and screen and wall and awning was made of some bright-lined calico, green or crimson, blue or yellow.

One day the King of Delhi decided on another plan. He sent a trusted servant to the raja with a message, to say that, having waited for twelve years in the hope of being able to take the fort and finding himself still no nearer the fulfilment of his wish than he was at the beginning, he had made up his mind to return to the north, but would like to be permitted to say farewell to the most brave and noble raja before breaking up his camp. Would the raja deign to pay him a visit, or should he, the king, come up to the fort to see the raja?

"It will be best," said the princess, "to invite him to come and bid you farewell in the fort."

"True," said the raja, "for within our own strong walls we are safe."

"We will prepare a feast for the king," said the princess, "which will prove to him that after twelve years we have still enough and to spare."

The princess with her own hands assisted in the preparation of sundry choice dishes, such as tasty curries and dainty sweet-meats, candied rose petals and lotus bulbs in syrup: for now that their enemy had announced his speedy departure she was happier than she had been for many a long day.

The king came on his farewell visit with a small army of horsemen. The serving women who peeped through the carved stone lattice-work of the upper galleries, down on to the sunlit pavement far below, to see as much as they could of the king from the

north and his followers, said afterwards that some 500 horsemen had entered with him through the palace gates.

Ala-ud-din as he climbed the steep path which twisted and turned up the side of the cliff, diving first through one tunnelled gateway and then through another, passing wall after wall of enormous strength and thickness, wondered no longer that he and his troops had found the fort so difficult to capture. Moreover it would seem that, all through the years that had passed, there had never been any lack of either food or water, for the wells within the walls of the fort were famous throughout the countryside and had never been known to run dry.

"No army on earth could take such a fortress as this," said the king to the raja.

The raja smiled, for in the gladness of his heart he was ready to treat the king as a friend; and when Ala-ud-din started at last on his journey back to the camp, the raja walked down the steep hill by his side to the last massive gates which shut them in from the outside world. The 500 horsemen marched out ahead of them and for the moment the king and the raja stood side by side exchanging a last word at the open gate.

"Salamat bachist (farewell)," said the king, and taking off a magnificent string of pearls that hung round his neck, he turned with a smile and offered them to the astonished raja, who, with Eastern politeness, hastily declined so costly a gift.

"Nay," said the king, "I myself will place them round your neck to show to you and to all men how



great is my admiration for the noble raja. You will wear them," he added, "in remembrance of the King of Delhi"; and flinging the pearls over the raja's head, he clasped his arms round his neck, and with a sudden jerk pulled him violently through the gateway. A shout, a clash of swords, and in an instant the king's horsemen had plunged back towards the gates, killing and stabbing those who had rushed forward from the fort to their master's assistance; then, seizing the unhappy prisoner, they rode off at mad fury, carrying him with them, down and ever down, twisting and turning till they had reached the foot of the cliff. In one furious gallop across the plain, they were soon within the camp; and the raja, who but a short time before had been entertaining the king at a sumptuous feast in his own palace, was now by that king's treachery a prisoner in chains.

Ala-ud-din smiled with pleasure. He had succeeded better even than he had expected: and now surely, he said to himself, it would be easy to get into the fort again and carry off the beautiful princess.

But the king did not know that the princess was as brave and as clever as she was beautiful.

In the secluded upper rooms behind the stone trellis-work of a high balcony, looking down upon the marble court, the princess had known by the cries and the confusion that there was trouble of some kind. A serving woman was the first to bring the news, but following in her footsteps came two of the raja's most trusted officers, and it was from them that the princess listened to the story of Ala-ud-din's treachery.

She stood before them, tall and superbly beautiful.

"I myself will command you," she said. "Who knows if his highness the raja is still alive? But if he be, we will save him yet; and if his officers and his men are faithful to him and to me, the King of Delhi will never succeed in capturing the fort."

But the armies encamped on the plain seemed in no hurry to make the attempt. On the contrary, Ala-ud-din sent friendly letters to the princess, and with the letters there were presents, choice jewels and other valuable gifts, and though at first she neither answered the letters nor accepted the gifts, there was one letter for which she was extremely grateful, for in it the king told her that her husband the raja was with them in the camp and in the best of health. True, he was a prisoner; but it was a great joy to the princess to learn that he was still alive.

It was after that welcome letter that the princess began to send messages to the king in return.

"I have told him," she said one day to the raja's most trusted officers, "that I will indeed meet him as he suggests, in the royal gardens."

The officers listened and made no answer, and the princess guessed what they were thinking. "Your surprise is great," she said, "and your hearts are sad, but listen to me. I have promised to meet Ala-ud-din if he will first make me a promise in exchange, and this is the promise that I have asked of him, that before I go to the royal gardens, I may first of all be allowed to visit the prison in the camp to say farewell to my husband."

"Has he given his consent?" they asked eagerly.

"Indeed he has, and given it willingly, but——": the princess lowered her voice so that only the two officers could hear what she said. They listened intently, and when a second time she asked if she might rely on their help, they answered quickly, that for her and for the raja they would gladly lay down their lives.

"But that, I hope, will not be necessary," she said, and with tears in her eyes she turned away.

Ala ud din sent word that all should be as the princess desired. He would wait for her in the royal gardens, whilst she paid her visit to the prison.

A very splendid palankeen with rich silk hangings of rose and gold was prepared for the princess, and very beautiful she looked in flowing draperies, the soft pink of a sunset cloud starred with silver. There were other palankeens almost as gorgeous for her maids of honour, and an escort of soldiers had been sent to protect them on their way to the camp.

At the last moment the princess, who did not really trust the king, sent him an urgent message. "Tell him," she said, "that if he breaks his promise, I am carrying a dagger with which I shall kill myself."

The palankeen was carried straight through the camp to the prison. There were many on the road-side who looked after it with much curiosity, but none could catch even a fleeting glimpse of the beautiful occupant, for she was hidden from every eye by the hangings of rose and gold. They watched the palankeen disappear through the prison gates: they noticed that the escort remained outside, for the princess had

made the king promise that when she paid her visit to her husband, none should be there to see.

The palankeen was placed on the ground before the door of the prison. The bearers salaamed and departed, carrying out their orders. Thus there was no one to give the alarm, when instead of the beautiful princess there descended from the palankeen two of the raja's officers. They pushed aside the hangings, dashed through into the prison, snapped in two the iron fetters with which the raja was chained, and in a few hurried words explained the trick that the princess had played.

The fleetest horse that the fort possessed, stood ready saddled near at hand, for this the raja's men had had time to arrange: and riding out through the crowd that was still waiting for the princess who never came, the raja galloped off, unobserved or, at least, unrecognised, and reached the fort in safety.

Meanwhile the king, waiting in the royal gardens, began to grow impatient. Those who could have told him what had happened were afraid to speak, for fear that in his anger he would slay them then and there. At last one bolder than the rest related the whole story from beginning to end. The princess had never left the fort, but in the royal palankeen, hidden from view by the hangings of rose and gold, two of the raja's most trusted officers had been carried to the prison in her stead. It was but the work of a few moments to set the raja free from his chains, and in the crowd that thronged outside the prison gates, waiting for the royal palankeen to pass, the horse with its strange rider had passed unnoticed.



Ala-ud-din listened in silence. Those around him trembled, but there was no cause just then for fear. As he turned away, they heard him mutter : " Allah is just. Those whom I deceived, have now deceived me."

## VII

### BABER "THE LION"

BABER "the lion," who with his steel clad horsemen had charged through the crowded ranks of the Afghan army, and defeated the Sultan of Delhi, was said to be one of the strongest men that had ever lived. He was so powerful that he had been seen on one occasion to run along the top of a high city-wall carrying two full-grown men, one under each arm. He could ride a hundred miles a day and feel no fatigue, and swim across every river he met, no matter how wide. So great was his courage, that every one agreed that he was rightly called "Baber the lion."

No matter what happened, he never lost heart. When, after his victory over the Sultan of Delhi, he marched in triumph to the royal palace at Agra, he found himself in a deserted city, for the people had fled in terror, and hidden themselves, no one knew where. The scorching rays of the summer sun fell on closed houses and empty shops, on stagnant water and rotting refuse. There was little food to be got, his men were hungry and thirsty too, but so terrible was the heat that first one and then another fell by the wayside, never to rise again. But still

Baber the chief never lost heart. "Those who like to leave me and to go back to their own land can do so," he said; but very few went. Then Baber thought out ways and means to improve matters. His courage and cheerfulness and his great generosity encouraged the people who used to live in the city to return. The peasants started work in the fields once more, and the shop-keepers spread out their wares again in the arcades of the city, and all men were contented: till one day came the news that a great army under a famous Hindu chief was marching on them from the west.

A troop of Baber's men sent on ahead was more or less cut to pieces. "They are like a swarm of locusts and ants, there is no end to them," said those who escaped. A fortress not far away was taken, and Baber's men, hearing that the enemy's army was well supplied not only with guns but with war elephants, began to lose heart.

"Nay, look yonder," said one of the more hopeful. "If I mistake not, these are men from our own country."

"Thou speakest truly. They have indeed come at the right moment to help us fight against the idolators and to aid us in this Holy War."

"Would that their numbers were greater," said the first speaker: "I can count from four to five hundred at most."

"And of what use are the camels?" said another.

"Three strings of camels do I see, and all of them heavily laden."

"It is said that they carry wine—choice wine from the vines of Ghazni."

And there were some who laughed, for all the wines of Ghazni would be of little service to them now. Yet it was this very wine, as they said afterwards, the one to the other, that helped to bring them success; for when Baber the chief beheld these three strings of camels with their costly burden, he bethought him of a way by which he himself might become more fit to be the leader of a great army in a Holy War.

"I vow," he said, and he uttered the words aloud in the presence of them all. "I vow never more to drink wine"; and the soldiers knew that Baber always kept his word.

Before night, by order of the chief, all the gold and silver drinking vessels had been battered into small pieces; for when Baber gave a command none dared to disobey.

Once more the Moslem army went forth to battle. One and all had made a solemn promise to fight until the end, but the end came more quickly than any of them had expected. The roar of the cannon, the storm of hand-grenades and rockets with which the battle commenced, caused a sudden stampede amongst some of the enemy's elephants, and by a fortunate chance a spear, hurled at random, glanced from the elephant's howdah in which the great raja himself was sitting, and wounded him severely. In a panic, the Hindus retreated. The battle-field where lay their dead and wounded, many of them in the yellow Rajput garb, was "like a field of golden saffron."



"Not to me, O Allah, but to Thee be the glory of the victory," said Baber. But the day came, not so long hence, when Baber sought a victory of another kind—a victory harder to win than any he had yet sought.

This time there was no field of battle, no great opposing army, no visible enemy.

Within the royal palace a strange silence reigned, the attendants crept about on silent feet and spoke in whispers. In a darkened chamber Hamayun the prince, the son whom Baber loved better than life itself, lay dying.

"In the whole world," Baber used to say, "there is no friend like Hamayun."

"There is no hope for him now," said the court physician: "nothing more can be done. Hamayun the prince must die."

And now, for the first and only time in his life, Baber began to lose heart. A pious Mahommedan, one of his trusted officers, stood at his side, trying to comfort him.

"It may be," he said, "that if you offer to God the most precious thing that you possess he will spare your son."

Baber shook his head and murmured:

"God is the Giver of little and of much.

In His court none other has power."

"Why not offer Him the great diamond that the family of Bikermajit presented as a thank-offering?" suggested the pious Mahommedan.

"Nay," said Baber, "my own life is more precious

to me than any diamond in the world. I will offer that to the Most High."

Slowly and solemnly he walked three times round the bed of the dying prince, earnestly praying as he did so, praying the same prayer over and over again: "May his ills be upon me! . . . May his ills be upon me!" And then he stopped suddenly, and cried out so that all might hear the joyous words: "I have borne his ills away."

Great were the rejoicings in the palace when it was known that Hamayun the prince had recovered. But soon the joy was turned to sorrow, for the great Baber himself had fallen ill on the very day of his prayer by Hamayun's bedside. He grew steadily weaker and weaker, and ere long had passed away.

"Little did we think how his prayers would be answered," said one who had loved him dearly. But the court physicians had their own opinion on the matter. "He has been ailing for a long while," they said.

## VIII

### THE STONE DUNGEON

THE day had been hot and steamy, and Shahji, the chief, a general in the army of the King of Bijapur, rode slowly down the highway under the banyan trees towards the palace. He was half asleep, for he had travelled many miles that day in the service of the king.

The banyan trees with their long seaweed like tresses, hanging in heavy masses from the boughs overhead, seeking a root hold in the ground, hid from view the many pairs of sharp eyes, which looked out at him curiously as he rode past. They were the eyes of the 'bander log,' the monkey people, who, in their hundreds and tens of hundreds, enjoyed life to the full in the shade of the banyan trees. Shahji cared nothing about the 'bander log.' He was thinking in a drowsy kind of way of all he had heard that day about his son Sivaji, who was still but a boy and was away in the city of Poona, learning all that boys of noble families were expected to learn in those days—riding and shooting and the use of the sword and the dagger, the spear and the dart. His skill in these things was unusually great, so his father had been told, and the boy's courage and ability had been much praised.

That night Shahji dreamt a wonderful dream. A being, terrible to look upon, seemed to appear before him. Her face was black, her fierce eyes glittered, and her red lips were bleeding, but Shahji felt no fear, for he knew that this must be Kali the goddess whose image he had often seen in the darkened inner court of the temple by the water-side. He had however never heard her utter any sound whatever, for the image in the temple was merely a painted idol made of wood and metal. Yet in his dream, it seemed to him that Kali was actually speaking and telling him in plain words that the day would come when some member of his family would become the Emperor of the whole of India, and that once again throughout the land men and women would worship the Hindu gods and goddesses.

Shahji awoke with a start. Close to his bedside a dark form sprang up chattering, and disappeared with a bound through the open lattice-work leading into the outer court. At first he thought of the goddess, but a moment later knew that his strange visitor was just one of the 'bander log' whom he himself had frightened. Then he bethought himself again of his clever son Sivaji. Surely the goddess must have meant Sivaji when she said that one of his family would become the Emperor of India.

Now the emperor of the largest part of India in those days was Shah Jehan<sup>1</sup> the Mogul who sat on the wondrous 'peacock throne' in the royal city of Delhi. Once Shahji, fighting among the troops of the King of Bijapur, had been defeated by the armies

<sup>1</sup> Shah Jehan, 1627-1658.







"HIS YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL WIFE."

of Shah Jehan ; but of late years, so Shahji had been told, the emperor had taken to spending his time and money in building a magnificent tomb for his young and beautiful wife. It was being built of pure white marble, inlaid with precious stones, and twenty thousand workmen had been working at it for years. Afar off, in the light of the setting sun, so Shahji had heard, it looked like a fairy palace carved out of ivory. He had also heard that the beautiful young wife with her maids of honour used to play at hide and seek in and out of the twilight halls, behind the great portals which some day were to be the gates of her tomb.

“ Methinks,” said Shahji to himself, “ the emperor cares more for building tombs and palaces now than for going forth to battle. Who knows but a day will come when a stronger than he will sit upon the ‘ Peacock Throne ’ ? ”

It was not very long before the name of Shahji’s clever son Sivaji was known far and near throughout the country-side.

He was very brave, said some : he was very reckless, said others. He was a fine soldier, said his admirers : he was nothing but a bandit and a robber, said those who disliked him. Before he was nineteen, he had led a troop of devoted followers to the hill fortress of Tornea, which he had promptly seized ; and finding a secret hoard of money in the ruins near by, he forthwith used it all in building a new fort. One success led to another, and Sivaji carried off victory after victory, until he became the chief of five important hill-fortresses.

At first the King of Bijapur had taken little notice

of Sivaji's doings, for Sivaji had tried his best to deceive the king. At last however many stories of the young warrior's victories reached the ears of his royal master, who now began to suspect that all was not well. He sent commands that were not carried out, he gave orders that were not obeyed, he summoned Sivaji to appear at Court, but Sivaji never came.

Day by day the young chief was growing more and more powerful, and Shahji his father was full of dread as to what would happen next, for the King of Bijapur was becoming exceedingly angry, and had uttered many terrible threats. If Sivaji could not be made to suffer for his misdeeds, then Shahji his father should suffer in his stead.

At last Shahji, in fear of his life, sent urgent messengers to his wilful son to tell him of the king's threats; but whether they ever got to him or not, Shahji never knew. That day soldiers of the king were sent to take Shahji prisoner.

Before many hours were over, the unhappy Shahji found himself thrust into a stone dungeon. It was so dark that at first he could not tell where the floor ended and the wall began, except in one place only, where a narrow opening let in a shaft of light.

"See you," said one of the guards, "if Sivaji surrenders, all goes well and you are free, but if not, orders have been given to block up that opening and——"

"And then," broke in another, "Shahji's dungeon will become his grave."

"But Sivaji *will* surrender," Shahji said to himself



though to his guards he said nothing. He knew that messengers had gone as fast as fleet horses could carry them to bear the tragic news of his imprisonment to his reckless son. Sivaji, he felt, would never let his own father be buried alive.

Day after day, Shahji waited, full of hope that the next day or the next would see him free again. The days changed into weeks and the weeks into months, but Sivaji never came, and the guards hinted, as they put the daily supply of food through the opening in the wall, that it would not be much longer before orders were given to turn the dungeon into a grave.

Still Shahji did not give up hope. His son, he was sure, had not forgotten him. Even in his dungeon he had heard rumours, that Sivaji was making friends with the Emperor Shah Jehan, and that the King of Bijapur was in no hurry to bring down on his head the wrath of so great a personage as the emperor.

Shahji in his prison lost count of time and did not realise that by now months had passed into years.

It is an Eastern saying that "eating stale food produces forgetfulness." Mercifully perhaps for the prisoner in the stone dungeon, his food was often stale, and his memory—whether from that cause or not, who can say?—became more and more forgetful.

At last the day came when his guards began to talk once more of blocking up the opening in the wall.

"This may be your last meal," they said to their unhappy victim as they brought him his frugal repast.

"We shall be here at dawn," said one; "and the stonemason will come with us."

"Farewell."

Shahji made no answer, but his heart was sad, for he had no longer any faith in Sivaji.

It was morning dawn and no one came. When the sun rose, a bright ray of light shone through the narrow opening. He expected every moment to hear the approach of the guards and the stonemason. He strained his ears to listen. What was that? the tramp of horses' feet, the sound of voices? He listened attentively and distinctly heard the clank of swords, and then silence, but the silence was not for long. Steps were coming ever closer. One of the guards was speaking, and suddenly he heard the thud of something heavy falling to the ground. No doubt those were the stones, with which his prison was to be turned into a grave, and he caught the sound of a pickaxe on the wall. Staring wildly at the opening, he perceived that a monster stone had fallen sideways blocking out the ray of sunlight.

So the end had come, and Sivaji had forgotten.

But who was that speaking? Surely he had heard that voice before? Crash came the pickaxe on the wall, and Shahji started up. Sunlight—sunlight that hurt and blinded him, for accustomed to darkness for so long, his eyes had grown weak—flooded the gap made by the fallen stones, and in the sunlight stood—not the guards nor the stonemason, but his son Sivaji!

But Shahji, dazed and half blind, hardly understood what had happened. It was only later on that it all became clear to him. Sivaji had come, not as a humble petitioner to ask pardon of the King of Bijapur, but as a proud vassal of the Emperor of

Delhi at the head of a troop of five thousand Delhi soldiers, and with a request from the emperor that Shahji might be released without delay.

Once again Shahji rode in state up the long road under the banyan trees, and the 'bander log' played and chattered amongst the branches, but some of the older monkeys, those who had seen much and were growing thoughtful, sat hunched up by the roadside, looking very old and very wise, as the great Sivaji passed by with Shahji his father. And Shahji looking at Sivaji began to think that after all his brilliant son might some day be the Emperor of India.

## IX

### A LOYAL SUBJECT

OLD MAHOMDU sat in the guard-house late one night, talking to soldiers who were off duty. He stroked his long beard, which was dyed red with henna to imitate the beard of Mohammed the prophet and quoted the well-known Persian distich :

There are days when your humble salaams  
He requites with a frown;  
But your hate he's as like to repay  
With a broidered gown.

“ Of whom speakest thou ? ”

“ Of the enemy at the gates—the Emperor Aurangzeb.”

“ Aie Aie. He is a strange man, they say. There are none who love him, but many who fear him.”

“ Even so, but men call him just, though in that matter of the tribute he was not just.”

“ How was that ? ”

“ Our gracious King Abu-l-Hassan sent the baskets of jewels according to agreement, and if Aurangzeb had kept his part of the contract we should have been left in peace : but no sooner were the jewels handed over, when the news came that Aurangzeb with his



great army was marching down upon our city of Golconda."

"Ah, he little knew the trouble in store for him."

"No indeed. 'Tis said that not only is there not enough food for his men, but that the plague has broken out amongst them, and many are dead and more are dying."

"That I too have heard. Allah be praised—we have still plenty of food here in the city. The stores of grain and rice are large; and there is fodder enough and to spare for the animals. Our horsemen outside the walls have done fine work."

"The army of the Moguls, alas, is like the waves of the sea; it is larger than our own."

"Larger it may be, but it is one thing to besiege a city and another to capture it. Why, it is many days now since last they tried to scale the walls. Hark, what was that?"

"Only a dog, methinks,—he that is mindful of favours."

"A dog it is without doubt; but such savage barking betokens something. See, he is up there on the wall. Others have heard him too. There is trouble afoot. To arms! To arms!"

Phew! A bullet whizzed through the air and in an instant the whole garrison was astir, for the sentry on guard had heard the angry barking and had seen what the dog had seen—shadowy forms in the dusky light creeping up noiselessly, propping their ladders against the wall in readiness for the ascent.

"Take heart, my friend, 'tis only a dog barking."

<sup>1</sup> Old epithet for a dog.

said one to the other, as they set foot on the ladders :  
“ the sentries are asleep.”

But even as they spoke the ladders were hauled back by invisible hands, and first one and then another of the would-be invaders were shot down and killed.

When King Abu-l-Hassan heard the story afterwards he gave orders that a beautiful golden collar should be presented to the dog !

“ Would that all the king's subjects were as loyal and as faithful as the dog,” said old Mahomdu.

Next time the Mogul emperor tried a different plan of assault. He sent forth a command that fifty thousand sacks, packed with earth, should be brought, and that the moat round the city-wall should be filled in, not only with the sacks but with logs of wood as well. The very first sack of all the emperor sewed with his own hands. Strange to say, he was not unused to ‘ needle-work ’ ; for in spite of the fact that he was one of the wealthiest emperors in the whole world, he had at one time considered it his duty to make skull-caps in order to pay for his food.

The filling in of the moat was the first step towards blowing up the ramparts of the city with mines. At last the day came for the firing of the mines. All preparations had been made, and soon—or so at least they expected—a great breach in the wall of the besieged city would open a way by which the Mogul troops might march to victory. But the breach, when it came, was not in the wall but in the first line of the Mogul army ; for the defenders of Golconda

had, by countermining, found a way of destroying the greater part of the enemy's mines, and the only explosion that took place buried a few score of Mogul soldiers under falling bricks and stones.

"Stones, bricks and men flew into the air like pigeons," said the men of Golconda, talking about it afterwards. In the confusion that had followed the explosion, the soldiers guarding the wall had dashed down upon the foe, killing and wounding those who were too stunned at first to defend themselves, and the guns from the fort opened fire. That night all that was left of the fifty thousand sacks of earth in the moat and the logs of wood was carried into the city to repair the ramparts.

"Ah," said the soldiers in the guard-house, "these Mogul musketeers can shoot straight when you give them time enough to fix their muskets on those wooden forks of theirs; but take them by surprise, they are no good whatever."

"Besides," said another, "they are afraid either of bursting their guns or of burning their beards."

"By force of arms," said old Mahomdu, "the Mogul emperor cannot take Golconda. But alas! there are other ways by which he will be more successful. I have seen——"

"What hast thou seen?"

"Nobles of the palace who have received letters from the emperor and who are now no longer in the palace."

"Are they in the dungeons of the fort?"

"Nay, but in the camp of the Moguls—friends amongst friends."

"They are traitors. Tell us their names. Not Abd-ar-Rassak the chief, or Abdallah Khan?"

Mahomdu shook his head. "They are loyal," he said, "and will be loyal to the end."

"Is that thy opinion? But Abd-ar-Rassak receives letters from the emperor."

"Thy words are false. Abd-ar-Rassak is no traitor."

"My words are true. Even now the spy who brought the letter awaits the answer. I have it from one of Abd-ar-Rassak's own men. Stay—thou canst see for thyself. Abd-ar-Rassak is now on his way to the garrison. The spy is there too. He is with the escort in the rear. Let us follow in their train."

"True, it is Abd-ar-Rassak," said Mahomdu, watching the horses as they passed: "but I say, as I said before—he is no traitor."

"Come quickly then: we shall see what we shall see."

Abd-ar-Rassak the chief stood amongst his men, an open letter in his hand, a scornful smile upon his face.

"What says he?" whispered Mahomdu to one in the crowd.

"He says that the Emperor Aurangzeb has offered him riches and honours at the price of dishonour: and look you, this is his answer!"

Abd-ar-Rassak was tearing the royal letter into small pieces which fell unheeded on the ground. "Tell the emperor," he said to the messenger, "that we shall fight to the death, even as the followers of the blessed Hussain fought at Kerbela."



"Did I not say so?" Mahomdu murmured  
 "Abd-ar-Rassak will be loyal till the end."

"And Abdallah Khan?"

"Aie Aie. He too."

But a few days later Mahomdu found out that though he was right about the one, he was wrong about the other.

A strange hubbub in the city aroused his attention—shrieks and the sound of wailing, the clatter of horses' hoofs, the trampling of many feet. "The Mogul troops are inside the walls," came the cry. "All is lost! Hae! Hae! Woe betide us!" And the people fled, they knew not whither; and often, in trying to escape, they fell under the sword of the enemy.

"It is the work of a traitor," said a soldier, as he passed: "a gate was opened to let them in."

"Which gate?"

"The east postern gate."

"Abdallah Khan had charge of the east postern gate. Alas! alas! So he was as disloyal as the rest."

"The fortress! the fortress!" shouted the soldiers: "that may still be saved." But the Mogul troops with a yell of triumph were there already, pouring through the gates—and into their midst rode Abd-ar-Rassak, trying single-handed to defend the palace of his king. Mahomdu could see him, fighting bravely, one sword against many, gashed and bleeding, swaying from side to side, yet he did not fall. Then the troops closed in and Mahomdu could see him no more. "He washed his hands of life,"

said the old man, "and doubtless now he is being trodden underfoot. But it was as I said: Abd-ar-Rassak was loyal till the end."

But the end was still to come.

The next day they found the bleeding body of the brave warrior lying still and unconscious under a palm tree outside the city walls—pierced with many wounds but still breathing.

Aurangzeb the Emperor had heard of his great bravery and knew the story of the torn letter and the bribe refused.

"Had the king possessed but one other servant as loyal as Abd-ar-Rassak, the city might not have fallen." So said the emperor, and forthwith he sent two of his own doctors to the aid of the wounded hero. Slowly, very slowly, he began to recover, but never once did he swerve in his allegiance to his old master. Nothing the emperor could say or do made any difference. Abd-ar-Rassak's answer was always the same: "No man who has eaten the salt of Abu-l-Hassan can enter the service of Aurangzeb."

And Aurangzeb was sad at heart, for loyalty such as this was seldom to be found in the court of the Mogul emperor.

*Story of Abd-ar-Rassak*

## THE ADVENTURES OF SIVAJI

### I. THE HIDDEN CLAWS

THE King of Bijapur feared that Sivaji, the great Mahratta chief, and the son of his old general, would soon become more powerful in the land than he was himself. True, Sivaji's army was not as large as the army of the King of Bijapur, but Sivaji was said to be as great a general as the famous Afzal Khan, who was at that time in command of the king's army.

The king gave orders to Afzal Khan to delay no longer, but to march with the most trusted of his troops against the rebel chief. Sivaji, when he heard what was going to happen, smiled a little scornfully as was his way.

"The army of Bijapur is a great army," said those who were with him; "Afzal Khan is a great general. If we are defeated, what then?"

"We shall not be defeated," said Sivaji.

To the surprise of all he sent a humble message to Afzal Khan.

"Before so powerful a foe," he said, "we are powerless, but if Afzal Khan the great general will deign to speak with Sivaji the unworthy, Sivaji's army will

offer no resistance to the army of Bijapur : but Afzal Khan must come in peace and alone and unarmed."

Afzal Khan, delighted at so easy a triumph, willingly promised all that Sivaji asked.

Moreover Sivaji's messengers had brought with them handsome gifts which were presented and accepted.

The spot appointed for the meeting was in a wooded glade below the Mahratta fortress. Afzal Khan did not look much like the general of a big army as he descended from his palankeen; and telling his bearers to keep behind, he stood alone waiting for Sivaji to approach. He wore a thin muslin robe, for the heat was great, and on his head a white muslin turban. Sivaji was also clad in cool white draperies. He came slowly and timidly down from the gateway of the fort. He seemed to be trembling with fear: the nearer he came the more he trembled. He almost cringed, crouching like some scared animal forced on against its will. Every few steps he stopped and, in faltering tones, asked forgiveness for all the wrong that he had done.

Finally he stopped altogether, too frightened to move another step, until Afzal had sent his attendants further back. Taking courage, Sivaji crept nearer till at last he fell upon his knees at Afzal's feet, weeping. But Afzal put out a friendly hand to raise him up. He was just going to throw an arm around his neck to embrace him in Eastern style, when Sivaji, crouching no longer, also stretched forth a hand, and in the half-closed fingers of that hand something glittered in the light. Afzal started back,



but all too late : Sivaji had struck him a deadly blow with a small steel weapon like the three crooked claws of a tiger, and snatching a dagger, shaped like a scorpion, from the sleeve of his muslin gown, he felled to the ground the man who had trusted him so fearlessly. In an instant he was surrounded by his own men, many of whom were close at hand waiting only for the signal to be given. With a wild shout of battle, they fell upon the unprepared army of the King of Bijapur. Many of the Bijapur soldiers were killed, some escaped in panic, others were taken captive. More than one attacked Sivaji himself, but Sivaji wore chained armour under his muslin robe and was not even wounded.

In his triumph, he marched through the land taking city after city. After a time he became so powerful, and his army became so great, that the King of Bijapur left off trying to fight against him and even granted him permission to rule over a large part of the country.

## 2. THE BEGGARS

THERE was a far greater monarch in India in those days than the King of Bijapur, and that was Aurangzeb,<sup>1</sup> the Emperor at Delhi, son of the one who had been a friend of Sivaji and Shahji his father, some years before.

Sivaji however hated the Emperor of Delhi and all his people ; and Shaista Khan, the emperor's

<sup>1</sup> 1659-1707.

uncle, hated Sivaji, who had been making a great deal of trouble with his robber armies in Shaista Khan's own dominions.

So Shaista Khan rejoiced when the Emperor of Delhi commanded him to march against the Mahratta chief with an army many times as large as Sivaji's own army. Sivaji however was far too wise to let himself be attacked in the open. He and his men retreated to their mountain forts. One of the biggest of these forts was besieged by Shaista's army for many long weeks. It happened to be the rainy season, when "heavy masses of cloud changed day into night." The stormy weather was far worse for the besiegers than for the besieged, for their muskets were spoilt, their powder became damp and the bows of the archers lost their strings.

At last after some sixty days, one of the walls of the fortress was blown up by mines. The soldiers, holding their shields before them, dashed onwards to victory. The fortress surrendered, but Sivaji with his usual good fortune escaped in safety.

Shaista Khan marched down on the city of Poona to rest awhile; for the Mahratta army, he fancied, would give no more trouble for some time to come.

Sivaji regretted the loss of his forts, and tried to think out some way by which he could 'surprise' the enemy, as once before he had 'surprised' the army of the King of Bijapur. This time it was not so easy, but something happened that proved a great help to the Mahratta chief. News was brought to him that Shaista Khan had taken up his abode in the very house in which Sivaji himself had lived as a

boy. Sivaji knew every nook and corner of that house, and with the mocking smile upon his face that his followers had learnt to look upon as a hopeful sign, he gave orders that there should be brought to him the dingy yellow rags which are always worn by beggars. He took off his clothes and put on the rags. Then he smeared himself with ashes from head to foot, and taking off his white turban he rubbed the ashes into his hair and all over his face.

"Now," he said, looking at his bare feet and holding a big stick in his hand. "all the world will take me for a beggar."

"True indeed," said his attendants. "no one would recognise the great Sivaji in this garb."

"But see you," he said. "not one but twenty beggars will pass through the gates of the city of Poona at 'cow-dusk' this evening. Disguise yourselves as I am disguised, and be in readiness to follow me when I give the word."

That night a wedding procession passed through the streets of the city, and there were twenty beggars or more in their yellow rags following in its wake.

"These beggars make trouble wherever they go," said one of the wedding-guests: and he told a story of a beggar who had invited himself to a marriage feast, and had clamoured for more than his share of the good things. When the owner of the feast, annoyed at his behaviour, bade him begone, he went off angrily. Before the feast was over, he came back again, bringing with him a great army of other beggars, who swarmed like robbers into the house and took whatever they pleased.

"I have heard such stories before," said his companion, "and well believe they might be true, but these fellows are not of that kind. Look you, even now, some of them have left us, and gone their own way."

He was right. A little company of the men in the yellow rags had turned down a side street, and were soon lost to sight in the darkness. One of these was Sivaji. He knew the city well; and with his men following close behind him, he led them through narrow lanes, and into the back court of a large house, the house where he himself had lived as a boy.

The hour was late. At the foot of a stone stairway leading to an upper chamber, they all but stumbled over the body of a sentry, who had grown tired and fallen asleep.

"So this is how they keep watch," said Sivaji, running him through with his dagger and passing on.

"The room at the top of the stair is the bedchamber of Shaista Khan," he whispered: "follow me and make no sound."

With their bare feet, one after the other crept all silently up the stairway; and Sivaji stood for an instant before the heavy tapestry curtain, which hung across the entrance to the room. He listened and heard a faint rustling sound within, as of some one moving. He waited no longer, but sprang like a leopard on its prey with his scorpion shaped dagger in his hand. But Shaista Khan was as quick as Sivaji. With a yell, he dashed back and leapt from the open window, holding for one instant to the stone ledge as he sprang. Sivaji, slashing at him with his



dagger, saw the blood spurt out from the hand and two bleeding fingers fell upon the floor. Then Sivaji turned, and he and his followers in their beggars' rags, fought their way out of the general's house, killing and wounding all who stood in their path. More than one of the 'beggars' seized a soldier's drum, and beat it so loudly that those who cried for help could not be heard.

Outside the city gates fleet horses awaited their coming, and Sivaji and his men rode off in triumph to one of his own hill forts, twelve miles away.

From afar off the hill looked as though it were on fire: for every man of Sivaji's army carried a blazing torch, and Sivaji passed through the arched gateway of his mountain fortress in a dazzling flare of light.

Shaista Khan had lost far more than his two fingers in the fight, for he had lost both his own courage and the confidence of his men. He had no desire any more to wage war against Sivaji; and before long he and his army marched away from Poona, and left the Mahratta chief to rob and pillage as before.

Sivaji roamed through the land taking fort after fort. He seldom stopped to eat; but as he rode along, he threw lumps of rice into his mouth, so that there should be no time wasted over 'sitting down to dinner.'

*Shaista Khan + his army*

### 3. A PRISONER

THE emperor in his palace at Delhi was more determined than ever to rid himself of Sivaji by some

means or other. Every messenger from the south brought news of some fresh deed of brigandage on the part of the Mahratta chief, or 'the mountain rat' as he was called, in the palace at Delhi. At last Aurangzeb heard that he had even gone so far as to attack some pilgrims on their way to the holy city of Mecca. This was more than the emperor could stand; and forthwith an army larger than any sent before, was dispatched to the south to crush the Mahratta troops and take their leader captive. Once again, one fort after another fell into their hands, but never from first to last did they succeed in capturing the 'mountain rat.' Sivaji, quick to see that, by a little humility on his part, he might still save a part of his possessions, acknowledged his defeat and came to terms with the enemy; and even, in a rash moment, accepted an invitation to pay a visit to the emperor's palace at Delhi.

No one really loved the Emperor Aurangzeb, but a great many people feared him. When once his mind was made up nothing could alter it; but if he was severe with others, he was also severe with himself. He had simple food to eat and plain clothes to wear, and often worked hard at making caps, in order, so he said, to pay for his food. In his heart of hearts he was rejoiced to hear that Sivaji had actually consented to come and visit him in his palace at Delhi. "When once he is here, he shall stay," thought the emperor to himself.

It was always said of Aurangzeb that he could never see more than one side of a question. Yet now was his chance to have made friends with the

Mahratta chief. If he had only been generous enough and wise enough to do this, he would have saved himself and his people a great deal of trouble in the days to come. As it was—Sivaji, quick to notice everybody and everything, saw from the first moment of his arrival that Aurangzeb meant to harm him if he could.

When he reached the palace, he hurried with many other guests to the 'Hall of Audience.' Never in his life had he seen so wonderful a sight. The pillars of the great hall were draped with rich brocade, the marble floor was covered with silken carpets. At one end stood the famous 'Peacock Throne,' made of shining gold, glittering with sparkling diamonds and crimson rubies, with rich green emeralds and dark blue sapphires. A gilded canopy rested on slender pillars wreathed with pearls, and above the canopy stood the jewelled peacocks.

Aurangzeb in his white satin robes sat upon the throne. His turban shone with diamonds, and in the midst of them one huge topaz gleamed like a golden star. Round the foot of the throne were the princes and the nobles, and then came the chiefs and ambassadors, who stood in humble attitude with folded hands, staring at the ground. Sivaji looked as humble as the rest, but in his heart he did not feel at all humble. On the contrary, every instant he was becoming more and more angry; for he had come to the palace as an invited guest of the emperor, and the emperor had not even deigned to notice him. He stood amongst the officers of lower-rank in a distant corner of the hall, and ground his teeth with rage.

The next day was Friday, and a little procession passed out of the palace gates which Sivaji saw from afar. Mounted troops clattered over the stones and behind them came the royal elephant, painted jet-black with two scarlet streaks on the forehead, and hung with silver chains and silver bells which tinkled softly as they swung from side to side. On the elephant's back, under a canopy that glittered like gold in the sunlight, sat the emperor. He was going, as Sivaji knew, to the great mosque in the centre of the city, to take part in the morning worship. Sivaji would have followed, but the gates were closed and the guards refused to let him pass. He went back across the courtyard, where yesterday he had stood amongst the crowd; but now it was deserted, and Sivaji passed on. He came at last to another great pillared hall with a ceiling of solid silver and pillars inlaid with precious stones. Whilst standing there, he heard the splashing of a fountain near at hand. Possibly, he thought, the fountain was in a garden: he would look and see. Instead of a garden he found himself in what he knew to be the royal bath-rooms. One apartment led into another, and the marble baths, sunk deep in the cool marble floor and sprayed upon by fountains, looked very delightful on a hot summer's day. But as Sivaji stood there, he caught the sound of his own name.

"Sivaji the Mahratta?"

"Sivaji the 'mountain rat,' you mean."

"Aie Aie. Hast thou seen him?"

"Once and only once."

"'Tis not likely thou wilt see him again."



“How is that ?” “Tis said that he remains here for ever, and that His Highness the Emperor will never consent to his going south again.”

“It is true he is a prisoner in the palace, but——” (the speaker lowered his voice), “but it is said that his days are numbered.”

Sivaji heard every word that was spoken, but could see no one.

“Whom do you seek ?” said a voice behind him. Sivaji turned to see one of the palace attendants. “His Highness the Emperor has gone to the Mosque. Moreover these are his private apartments.”

The Mahratta chief, muttering words the other did not understand, went slowly back the way he had come, across the sunlit outer court and into other courts, until he arrived at the far corner of the palace where he and his attendants were housed. And as he went, walking slowly and thoughtfully, he made his plans for the future. He knew now that he was a prisoner within the palace gates, and that the servants who salaamed so respectfully, watched his every movement. Before long he discovered that armed guards were stationed outside the doors of his own apartments. But Sivaji was never at a loss. He would plan a way of escape which these hard-headed Northerners would never have the wit to discover. The first thing to be done was to fall ill.

Thus the next morning it became known throughout the palace, that Sivaji the Mahratta chief lay in bed sick with fever. This sudden illness aroused the emperor's suspicions. He gave orders that the part

of the palace where Sivaji and his attendants were housed, should never be left without a guard either by night or day.

It was fortunate that Sivaji could place perfect trust in his own servants, those whom he had brought with him from the south. Whatever their master suggested they were ready to do. Thus it came about that they took particular pains to be on friendly terms with the Moslem soldiers who guarded the outer doors. One evening at dusk they lingered awhile with a huge basket of sweetmeats, that they were carrying between them, slung on a bamboo pole. They presented some of the best of the dainties to the guards who took all they could get and grinned their thanks.

The next evening the basket was borne forth again : and as the men passed with their burden, more of the delicacies were slipped into the hands of the soldiers.

"Alas, the great chief is too ill to care about such things any longer," said one.

"We take them back to the Bazaar," murmured the other, "and buy fruits instead."

"If by to-morrow our noble master is no better," said a third, "'twould be as well to summon a physician."

And they passed on quickly. They were soon outside the gates of the palace : nay, before long they were outside the gates of the city, and beyond the crowded suburb where the throng was even greater than in the streets of the city.

At last in the shadow of a high wall at the edge

of a lonely field they placed the heavy basket of sweetmeats upon the ground, and waited, listening.

"Chup," said one, "hush, I hear some one coming."

"Tis well it is growing dark. There are certainly footsteps."

"I see no one."

"Look again. There in the shadow of the wall, a figure moves, and comes towards us."

"Thou art mad. 'Tis but a pariah dog."

And then, facing the basket of sweetmeats, they salaamed respectfully.

"All is safe," said one, speaking in a loud whisper. "There is no one in sight."

The sweetmeats scattered to the right and left, and out of the basket scrambled Sivaji.

"Where are the ashes," he asked, "and the beggar's clothes?"

They were there in front of him, for the servants had forgotten nothing. Whilst Sivaji shaved off the hair on his face, and smeared himself with ashes, they arrayed him in the dingy yellow rags. Then they salaamed once more, as they watched the great chief who always found a way out of every difficulty trudge off into the darkness, taking the road that led to the south.

Thus once again did Sivaji outwit his enemies, nevermore, so history relates, to fall into their hands. He had many adventures and many narrow escapes, but the day came when craft and trickery were no longer of any avail. A few years later, when still in the prime of life, he was suddenly taken ill and died.

*Travels of Sivaji Maharaj*

## XI

### THE DEFEAT OF AN ARMY

It was early morning at the beginning of summer in the city of the 'Pool of Immortality.' The silvery veil of dawn still hung fresh and cool over the waking world. The scent of dewy roses came and went, borne on the morning breeze. Here and there a bougainvillea fell in a shower of purple stars from overhanging branches.

Some of the little open-fronted shops were still but half-awake, yawning and empty: the shopkeepers were making sleepy preparations for the day's work. Now and again, the white robed figure of a man squatting by the wayside was busy washing his face and hands in a thin trickle of water which he poured out slowly from a brass bowl of such spotless cleanliness that it glittered like gold. A seller of 'golden loquats' was arranging his fruit on a layer of fresh green leaves spread out on the pathway. He looked up to see a strange figure hurrying by—a tall dark man clad in dusky blue, and wearing a turban ringed around with steel quoits. He carried a sword slung round his neck and a wooden club and the handle of a fearsome knife stuck out from among the quoits on the turban. The loquat seller



knew from the man's dress that he was a soldier, and one of a fierce band who were famous for their fighting powers but feared by the country people because of their lawlessness.

"What news does he bring?" asked the loquat seller.

"Bad news, I fear," said a passer-by.

Soon a little knot of the shop-keepers had gathered by the wayside, talking of what they had heard.

"Jassa Singh, the chief, they say, is still in the fortress by the river, and the armies of Sada Kour and the young Raja, her son-in-law, are closing in round the fort on every side."

"Yet there are soldiers enough in the fortress to defend the place against all the armies of India," boasted one of the young men in the crowd.

"That is foolish talk," said the first speaker. "Soldiers cannot fight unless they are fed, and it is said that Jassa Singh has little provision left."

"Moreover," added one who had not spoken before, "the enemy keeps strict watch north, south, east and west, so that the country people dare not venture to carry either food or fodder to those within the fort."

"Whither is yonder fellow bound?" asked the loquat seller, nodding his head in the direction in which the strangely garbed soldier had disappeared.

"He goes to the priest in the 'Golden Temple' with a message from Jassa Singh."

"Let us go there too and hear more," said some of the speakers, for they began to see that the matter

was one of great importance to them all : if Jassa Singh were defeated, the armies of Sada Kour would without doubt sweep down upon the city of the ' Pool of Immortality ' killing and destroying.

Flights of marble steps led down from the temple gates into an enchanted world, so beautiful did the ' Golden Temple ' look in the soft hazy light of the early morning. It stood on a terrace of snowy white marble in the centre of a great sheet of water, that glittered like crystal in the sunlight. A marble pathway shaded by trees led across the water to the shining golden walls of the temple building and the doors that were plated with silver. The inner sanctum was one blaze of gold and colour. The pungent scent of crushed marigolds and the sweet smell of yellow jasmine filled the air ; and no wonder, for on a white sheet spread upon the ground before the gigantic volume of the ' Holy Book,' from which the priest was chanting slowly and unceasingly, marigolds and jasmine and other golden-tinted flowers in wreaths and garlands had been flung as offerings. There was money there too as well as the flowers. Those who had come to worship, sat or crouched in a circle before the priest, and some few joined in the chanting.

" . . . Day and night man should devote himself to God. None should enter his heart but One," chanted the priest : and the words were echoed by the people.

But the soldier who had come as a messenger from Jassa Singh, the chief, desired to see the head priest of the ' Golden Temple ' on important business. When





SIKH GURU OR TEACHER.



the chanting was over, the priest and the soldier disappeared together into an inner chamber whither none might follow, but there were many who remained on the marble terrace by the side of the cool water, waiting to hear what was going to happen. They were all Sikhs, these men tall black-bearded Sikhs – for the city of the ‘Pool of Immortality’ is the great city of their race. The iron bracelet that each one wore upon his wrist was there to remind him that his hand should do no evil.

“It is certain,” said one to the other, “that Sada Kour will listen to the words of the priest.”

“What is it then that the priest has said?”

“He has sent a letter, written by his own hand, to command Sada Kour to withdraw her troops without delay.”

“Sada Kour bears Jassa Singh a grudge, they say, for the part he played in the battle of Batala, but in that matter, so the priest believes, Jassa Singh was blameless.”

“It is fortunate,” said the loquat seller, “that no Sikh cares to disobey the commands of the priest of the ‘Golden Temple.’”

There were many standing round who thought the same thing, for the head priest was a man of great power.

Before many days had passed, however, other messengers riding on horseback at all speed, arrived in the city of the ‘Pool of Immortality.’ They brought the alarming news that Sada Kour had actually refused to listen to the high priest’s command. It had come to her ears that Jassa Singh was

short of food. Her enemy, she felt, was now within her power.

This time the high priest sent no further message to the rebellious Sada Kour, but the words that he spoke in the hearing of all those gathered in the temple, were repeated far and near. "... My words are of no avail, but God Himself will aid you."

Jassa Singh's messenger felt heavy-hearted as he rode back along the road that he had so lately travelled, for he was not one of the devout and therefore he put more faith in man than in God, but the priest of the 'Golden Temple' knew better.

That night when the armies around the fort were making their last preparations for the victory, which (they were sure) would be delayed no longer, words were whispered through the camp that struck many a heart cold with fear.

"The river is rising."

"What does it matter if the river is rising or not?" said one, who was either braver or more ignorant than the rest. "It will do us no harm."

"Ah," said another, "that is foolish talk. The last time the river overflowed its banks, the flood-waters covered many a mile of land; houses were destroyed, people were drowned, fields were carried away, and——"

"By the time that happens," said the first speaker, "we shall be out of harm's way within the walls of the fort upon yonder hill."

"You speak thoughtlessly. The taking of the fort may not be as easy as you think. It is said that Jassa Singh is in league with the high priest of

the 'Golden Temple,' and that those who defend the fortress have help of which we know not. Besides, if the river rises as it rose before, we shall have no time to escape. Hark! What was that?"

A cry of distress rang through the air, and running to the spot they found that a high bank, that overhung the swirling brown water, had fallen in, carrying with it two lads who had been standing too close to the edge. In another instant they were swept away by the swift current; and with a heavy thud and a big splash, still another bit of the crumbling bank tumbled over into the rushing stream.

"Mark the speed with which the river is rising," said one. "Who knows how high it will be by to-morrow?"

There were still many, however, who paid no heed to the warning of those who remembered the flood of the days gone by. Still the preparations were continued for the final attack on the fort by daylight on the morrow.

The messenger from the 'Golden Temple' had, under cover of the darkness of the night, made his way back to his master's side in safety, climbing the hill by a secret path covered by brushwood and known only to a few.

When Jassa Singh, watching the movements of the enemy from the walls of the fortress, marked how the river had overflowed its banks, and how the water was rushing by, tearing up roots of trees and forcing its way ever further and further over the land, he remembered the saying of the high priest: "My words are of no avail, but God Himself will aid you."

By the morrow the river had turned into a foaming torrent; the green land on either side had disappeared: north, south, east and west, there was nothing to be seen but water—sullen mud-coloured water, that was oozing ever further and further over the land till the little hill crowned by the fortress stood like an island in a tawny yellow sea. Now and again a black tangle of wreckage drifted past and, sucked in by the current, was soon carried out of sight. Guns, tents, camels, horses and many a brave soldier had been swept away by the raging flood. It was true that Sada Kour and the young raja, her son-in-law, had contrived to escape, but the flower of her army had been lost.

“Did I not say,” said one of those who had followed Sada Kour, “that the priest of the ‘Golden Temple’ was on their side?”

“It was not the priest,” said another; “it was God Himself.”



## XII

### THE PEAK OF LIGHT

MIR JUMLA had begun life as a diamond merchant and had prospered exceedingly, so much so, that the diamonds which he possessed were almost too many to be counted and he reckoned them by the sackful. But he had one diamond that was larger and finer than all the rest, which was never put away in a sack with the others. He called it the Koh-i-Nur or the 'Peak of Light,' and it was the most wonderful diamond in the whole world.

Mir Jumla possessed many talents as well as diamonds, and before long he gave up being a diamond merchant, and because of his great ability—he became not only a powerful statesman but a famous general. He led the troops of the King of Golconda to more than one brilliant victory, but after a while he quarrelled with the king and became friends with the great Mogul emperor, who was one of the king's enemies.

Later on, Mir Jumla went to the palace at Agra, to see the emperor himself, and to suggest that the emperor should send an army to conquer some of the wealthy kingdoms of the south.

The emperor was playing chess when Mir Jumla

arrived. The chess-board was a marble court in front of one of the royal pavilions, and the chess-men were real people. Mir Jumla meanwhile waited till the game should be finished, in the wonderful hall of mirrors, where the walls were made of pounded talc and shone like silvery water.

The emperor was very fond of two things: one was pleasure-making and the other was palace making—the building of palaces. Some of the most beautiful buildings in India were his work. He liked all things that were beautiful, and Mir Jumla, knowing this and wishing to please the emperor, gave him the most beautiful of all his diamonds—the wonderful ‘Peak of Light.’

Many years passed away and Mir Jumla and the emperor were no longer living, but still the wonderful ‘Peak of Light’ glittered in the famous ‘Peacock Throne’ of the emperor’s palace at Delhi, until the day came when an invading army from the land of Persia swept down upon the royal city of India, killing and robbing. The Peacock Throne, studded with jewels, was seized by the invaders and carried away to a far-off city in another country, but the leader of the army did not live long to enjoy his ill-gotten wealth. The ‘Peak of Light’ fell into other hands, till at last, a little more than a hundred years ago, an exiled king of Kabul, fleeing to India for safety, brought back with him, so it was rumoured, the famous Koh-i-Nur diamond.

In those days Ranjit Singh the Sikh ruled over the greater part of the North of India. Ranjit

Singh,<sup>1</sup> if he set his heart on anything, never stopped until he got what he wanted. He heard that Shah Shuja, the exiled king, possessed this wonderful diamond. Shah Shuja just then was living in the royal city of Lahore by permission of the ruler of the Sikhs : so Ranjit Singh sent a messenger from his palace to request that the 'Peak of Light' should be handed over to him without delay.

"The Peak of Light !" exclaimed Shah Shuja. "Does not the raja know that I am but a poor fugitive in a strange country ? How comes it that he thinks I am still in possession of the famous diamond ? He would search this house for it in vain."

The messenger went back to his royal master and repeated Shah Shuja's words. Ranjit Singh smiled, and the next time he sent a different sort of message.

"Tell Shah Shuja that, if he will consent to part with the diamond, Ranjit Singh will present him with a large estate."

This time Shah Shuja sent back a different answer, and said that he had spoken truly in saying that the diamond was not to be found in his house, for a 'shraff' or 'money-lender' was taking care of it for him : but that if Ranjit Singh would prove that he was willing to help him to get back to his own kingdom, the coveted jewel should be handed over to him without more ado.

This time Ranjit Singh did not smile. He fell into a temper and sent no more polite messages to the exiled king, but forthwith ordered a body of soldiers

<sup>1</sup>b. 1780, d. 1839.

to surround his house, guarding the doors by night and by day. He had discovered, so he said, that Shah Shuja had been guilty of treachery; and henceforth, so ran Ranjit Singh's command, every man, woman or child who came out of the exile's house should be searched from head to foot, and no one carrying either food or fuel was to be allowed to go in.

Shah Shuja and his friends were in a sorry plight. As the days passed on their store of grain began to grow less and less, till at last, after some eight weeks had gone by, hardly a scrap of food remained in the house.

In the apartments of Shah Begum, the king's wife, there was much unhappiness.

"Surely it were better to let the diamond go rather than to die of starvation," said one.

"Besides," said Shah Begum, "we have other diamonds that are almost as beautiful as the 'Koh-i-Nur.' In the court of Ranjit Singh there are few who have jewels that are equal to ours."

"Decko! (See then!)," and from a deep hole, cut in the thick stone wall and having an opening too narrow to admit of any hand save the slender one of a woman, she drew forth a handful of emeralds like a bunch of green grapes and a string of gigantic pearls.

So in the end, Shah Shuja, fearing an even worse fate in the future if he continued to resist, agreed to hand over the diamond to Ranjit Singh, if he would come himself to receive it and would also give his promise in writing to do all in his power to help the



exile back to his kingdom. Ranjit Singh willingly accepted both conditions. The promise was made out in writing, and he signed it in his usual way with the flat of his hand dyed in saffron. Shah Shuja had never yet set eyes on the famous 'lion of the Punjab' as Ranjit Singh was called. He expected to see a dignified monarch clad in the sumptuous attire of the rulers of those days. He could hardly believe that the plain little man with a very big head and a very high turban, dressed in ugly clothes, the colour of gambooge, could be the great Sikh raja. His face was pitted with small-pox marks, and his nose was much swollen, his left eye was always tightly closed and the other was almost too widely opened: it rolled wildly from side to side or glared suspiciously at first one and then another.

He arrived with but a handful of attendants. He stared with his one open eye, but never a word did he speak. Neither did Shah Shuja speak to him. Five minutes passed ten, twenty—and no one uttered a word. They stood opposite each other in dead silence, and thus they remained for a whole hour. Then Ranjit Singh suddenly broke the stillness, and with strange abruptness demanded the 'Koh-i-Nur' diamond. Orders were given to servants in attendance that the jewel should be fetched. They reappeared, bearing a small package. Ranjit's one open eye gleamed with triumph, his thin lips stretched tightly over his teeth seemed for an instant to smile. From the first moment he saw it, he knew that this huge glittering gem could be no other than the famous 'Peak of Light.'

He seized it eagerly, and turning sharply, without one word of thanks, without one sign of farewell, he left the house—a little ugly figure in his gambooge-coloured garments, holding in his hands the long coveted possession.

Shah Begum had caught sight of the ‘lion of the Punjab’ through a chink in a curtained window on the day of his strange visit, and often spoke jestingly of his quaint appearance and ugly clothes.

“After all, what matters it that we have lost the ‘Koh-i-Nur’?” she said. “We have still many jewels of rare beauty and value.”

Shah Shuja stroked his black beard and smiled.

“Aie Aie. What do I hear? Surely it is not Ranjit Singh come back again. Methinks I heard his name, and the voices are not the voices of our own people.”

Shah Shuja stroked his beard no longer but listened intently. The sound of many footsteps and loud voices had aroused his suspicions. At that moment a servant entered the apartment.

“Her Highness, the wife of Ranjit Singh, the great raja, has come and desires to visit the Shah Begum.”

Shah Begum, clad in wonderful turquoise-blue draperies threaded with gold, and wearing over her dark hair a sky-blue scarf starred with silver, prepared to welcome her unexpected guest. The ladies-in-waiting gathered round her; but one looked at the other with fear in her eyes, for loud angry voices, and amongst them that of Ranjit Singh’s wife, could be heard not far away.

“Hae! Hae!” cried a serving woman of the Begum’s. She had heard on what errand the wife

of Ranjit Singh had come, and had run quickly in to tell her mistress. So this was no friendly guest, but an enemy who with her attendants had forced herself upon them in order to seize their possessions. They went from room to room taking all they could find, pearls, emeralds, sapphires, diamonds. Then, laden with riches, they demanded the very jewels the Begum herself was wearing. Nay, they did more than demand, they tore them from her by force. It was no use trying to resist, for the robbers were many in number. As they departed with their booty, one said to the other, "See then, these diamonds are not so large but they are quite as beautiful as the wonderful 'Koh-i-Nur.'"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> When the Punjab was ceded to the British the Koh-i-Nur diamond became the property of the King of England, and it is still one of the largest diamonds amongst the crown jewels.

*Koh-i-Nur Diamond*

## XIII

### THE ROBBER CHIEF

"THE Mahrattas are bad enough, but they are better than these robber folk," said Tulsi Das.

"Aie Aie, the Mahrattas are brave and can fight; but these Pindaris, they only fight those who are weaker than themselves. They are nothing but thieves and robbers. They would sooner run away than face a foe; they boast that they can run so fast that none can ever catch them."

"Have you heard what they did to the poor fellows over yonder?" said Tulsi Das.

"The village where your cousins live?"

"Aie Aie. They said that the farmer folk in that village had money and were hiding it, and my cousins' father told them this was not so, and they cut off his ears and his nose and left him bleeding on the ground. Then they took his son and tied oiled cotton rags round his fingers and set light to them as though they were candles. Now, they said, you can show us where the money is hidden."

"Hae Hae! But that is no new thing. That is what they are doing all the time, north, south, east and west. Sometimes they make the poor creatures whom they mean to rob stand on hot irons till their



feet are burnt to cinders, and sometimes they pour hot oil on their clothes and set them on fire."

"At least the Mahrattas are kind to the women and children, but these robbers—they show mercy to no one."

"For my part I rejoice to hear that these strange white people from the west, who are growing so powerful in the land, are going to send a great army to destroy every Pindari in the country."

"How hast thou heard this news?"

"How does one hear all news? They are 'flying words' (rumours): they fly like the wind, they come no one knows whence, they go no one knows whither, but all men hear them as they pass."

"These white people from the west are as brave as any in the land, and fight like tigers; but even so 'tis said that they love peace better than war, and that, wherever they go, people become more and more happy and more prosperous."

"Those who live in the river must make friends with the alligator." These Westerners are growing very powerful in the land."

"Nay, it is not fair to call them 'alligators.' I myself have lived in a city that belongs to the white men, and I will tell you that there is one thing in which all are agreed, both those who love them and those who do not love them: all say that, when the white man makes a promise, that promise is never broken."

"I also have heard that said."

"And one other thing I have noticed, that they will give to those who need without expecting anything in return."

“ Ah, that is good to hear ! I too begin to rejoice that they are coming to destroy these robber armies. Who are these robbers ? Many of them have done such deeds of wickedness in their own homes, that they can no longer live amongst their own people. They go from place to place, not to conquer like the Mahrattas, and not to bring peace like the Westerners, but to rob and injure. To begin with, they were like jackals, following the Mahratta armies, and picking up whatever they left behind : but now they have their own armies—thirty thousand men or more in each, and there are many chiefs. There is one, the worst of the lot, called Chitu, who, they say, has had many escapes but who still prospers.”

“ Amir Khan is another of their leaders. In the bazaar this morning there was much talk about Amir Khan. The army led by the white men attacked his army, and——”

“ And Amir Khan turned and fled ? ”

“ Not so. He surrendered, and is now friends with the white men, who have given him the title of Nawab and the district of Tonk.”

“ Wah ! Wah ! That is a surprising piece of news. And what has become of Chitu ? ”

“ Of Chitu I know nothing, save that he has still some thirty thousand men— all of them brigands.”

It was not long after this that welcome tidings were borne on the wings of the wind to the little Indian village.

“ Thy words were true words,” said the man who brought the news, to Tulsi Das. “ A great battle

has been fought at Mahidpur. The armies of the Westerners marched from the north and from the south, and closed like a wall around the army of the Mahrattas and some thirty thousand of these Pindaris, who were led by Chitu."

"Did they fight?" asked one; "or did they run away?"

"Some say one thing and some another. 'Tis rumoured that many of the Pindaris gave up their arms, and did not try either to fight or to run away, but some of them managed to escape."

"And Chitu?"

"Chitu got away amongst the first: and, look you, 'tis said that he and his followers were known to flee to the south, and some will have it that they are hiding in the village over yonder, where a year ago he and his brigands killed every living soul."

"Hae! Hae! Would that the Westerners with their victorious army could destroy them utterly!"

"It is certain that Chitu will not be allowed to escape. The white men have vowed that no Pindari shall remain in the country; and what the white men have said, they have said."<sup>1</sup>

"Listen, all of you," said Tulsi Das some time later; "I have been to the jungle to gather fire-wood, and I have seen Chitu the Pindari."

"Alas, alas! Our lives are no longer safe."

"Have no fear," said Tulsi Das. "The water-carrier who lives not far from there, tells me that those who were with him have all gone and left him to his

<sup>1</sup> The British conquered the Pindaris in 1817.

fate, and that he has fled from place to place, hunted by those who would kill him, if they could, or take him captive to the victorious army."

"Can this be true? But yesterday Chitu had his own army of thirty thousand men, and now you say he is left as a wanderer in the jungle."

"Even so: and to-night I and Gunga Ram the water-carrier, and our two sons, are going to take him bound in chains to the army of the white men."

"We too will lend a hand," said his friends: "it is a good deed to rid the world of a robber like Chitu the Pindari."

It was a bright moonlight night, and as the villagers crept stealthily along the path towards the jungle, they heard the sound of whining not far away. A moment later a she-bear and two whining cubs passed under the bushes, making for the nearest field of sugar-cane.

"Where then is this Chitu?"

"In a clearing just inside the jungle," answered Gunga Ram: "he sleeps there of a night up in the branch of a tree, to be out of the way of —"

"Hark! Was that the roar of a tiger?"

"It matters not. There are many of us together, and we have guns."

"There is something moving amongst the bushes. Look there under that tree. It is the tiger."

Tulsi Das was right. On the edge of the jungle the tiger, a huge tawny beast, old and rather mangy, stood for an instant sniffing the air, as though he suspected that all was not well. Then suddenly he



swung back, and slipped all silently under the bushes again, and was soon out of sight."

" 'Tis as well," said Tulsi Das. "We have come out in search of a man and want no tiger."

"Look you," said Gunga Ram. "Climb but a few feet into these trees, and you will see the place I mean, and we can tell if Chitu is still there. Methought I heard a sound of rustling. He may be seeking a fresh spot in which to hide."

They clambered up into the trees, and in the clear moonlight they could see the robber-chief facing the last foe he would ever need to face and trying—for the last time in his life—to run away. But it was too late. He gave a yell, and cried out something, they could not tell what; but as he started to run, the king of beasts, staring with glassy eyes through the bushes, gave a muffled roar and sprang upon his victim.

His right paw fell with the weight of an axe on Chitu's head, crashing the skull; and the tiger stood growling over the dead man's body, his tail lashing from side to side.

"This time," murmured Tulsi Das, "Chitu had no chance to run away."

"Truly he has met with his deserts."

"May be; but that tiger was a man-eater: we were lucky to escape."

## GLOSSARY.

**Aie, aie**—Yes, yes.

**Allah**—Mohammedan name for God.

**Banyan Tree**—The Indian fig, sacred tree of India, whose branches root themselves over a wide extent.

**Bāk Bāk**—Bosh.

**Betel nut**—*Areca catechu*. The fruit is much used for chewing in some parts of the East.

**Bougainvillea**—A tropical plant, called after an eighteenth century French navigator, Bougainville.

**Divan**—A cushioned seat.

**Ellora**—A place in the dominions of the Nizam of Hyderabad, famous for its beautiful 'cave temples' cut out of the rocks.

**Hae, Hae** (pronounced *hay*)—Alas! Alas!

**Henna**—Egyptian privet, from which a red substance is derived, used as a kind of rouge.

**Howdah**—A seat for two or more (usually with a canopy) on an elephant's back.

**Jungle folk**—Belonging to one or other of the aboriginal tribes of India. They are very dark-skinned and of a wild and primitive nature.

**Kali**—A goddess: the 'Terrible One' or the 'Black One'; wife of Siva, the 'lord of birth and death.'

**Loquats**—A pleasant, somewhat acid, spring fruit, golden yellow when ripe.

**Mogul**—Mongols, called Moguls by the Persians.

**Mongoose**—Small brown animal that can kill snakes, rather like a ferret.

**Moon Lord**—In Hindu mythology the moon is a male deity, which, according to some of the legends, has arisen from the 'milk sea' when churned by the gods to produce the beverage of immortality. The Moon Lord is generally represented wearing white garments and bearing a mace in one hand.

**Pagoda**—Hollow octagonal tower of Hindu origin.

**Palankeen**—Carriage borne on men's shoulders.

**Pindaris**—Hordes of robbers of a peculiarly cruel and despicable nature.

**Quoits**—Those worn in the turbans of a certain class of Sikh soldiers are made of thin steel with a sharp cutting edge. They are 6 to 8 inches in diameter, and are partly used as weapons and partly used for show.

**Salaam**—'Peace,' a common form of salutation in the East : it is accompanied by a low bow of the head and body, with the right palm on the forehead.

**Saffron**—Species of crocus, the dried stigmas of which produce a yellow pigment.

**Saree**—Drapery worn by Indian women.

**Sikhs**—Literally 'learners' or 'disciples'; a reformed sect of Hindus.

**Stampede**—The sudden fright and scattering of a number of horses or cattle.

**Sultana**—Queen of an Eastern Emperor.

**Talc**—A mineral, shining, pearly and translucent.

**Tamasha**—Show or spectacle.

**Topaz**—A precious stone, generally yellow.

**Wah Wah**—Exclamation of surprise.

## QUESTIONS AND SUBJECTS FOR SHORT COMPOSITIONS.

1. Tell the story of Gautama briefly, and quote one or two of his wise sayings (I.).
2. Write a song for the Jungle-folk.
3. Describe the scene by the river side as it might be described by a boy or girl who had been in the crowd (II.).
4. Write two stanzas describing the temple of the Moon Lord by the Arabian Sea (III.).
5. A letter written by the princess to her old nurse describing her life in the merchant's family (IV.).
6. Do you know any other stories of Warrior Women in history? (V.)
7. What do you know of Akbar the Great, his achievements and his aims? (V.).
8. Write a description in verse of the scene at the gateway when Alauddin treacherously seized the Raja (VI.).
9. A poem on the death of Baber (VII.).
10. For a composition in prose or verse—Shahjahan meditates in the solitude of his dungeon (VIII.).
11. What do you know of the marble tomb built by Shah Jehan? (VIII.).
12. Do you know any other historical stories of a deliverance due to an animal or animals? (IX.).
13. What do you think of the character of Sivaji? (X.).
14. Do you know any other historical stories of great floods? [Read the story of the deliverance of Leyden in Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*.] (XI.).
15. Write eight lines of verse (rhymed) on the Koh-i-Nur (XII.).
16. What is the real value of diamonds? Can you account for the fascination they exercise? (XII.).
17. What do you know of the Pindaris, and the story of their conquest? (XIII.).



## HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY.

1. *A Short Manual of the History of India*, by Sir Roper Lethbridge (Macmillan).

2. *Readings from Indian History for Boys and Girls*, by Ethel R. Sykes (C. L. S. I., Vol. 1—1915, Vol. 2—1916). The main facts of *The King's Quest* and *The Biter Bit* have been taken from these most attractive and recently published volumes.

3. *History of Ancient and Modern India*, by Romesh C. Dutt (Macmillan). The chapters on the condition of the people at various periods in their history are especially interesting. A smaller book by the same author is *The Civilisation of India* (Temple Primers, Dent).

4. *A Brief History of the Indian Peoples*, by Sir W. W. Hunter; revised by W. H. Hutton (Clarendon Press).

5. *Ranjit Singh*, by Sir Leppel Griffin, and *Aurangzeb*, by Stanley Lane-Poole, in the 'Rulers of India' series (Clarendon Press).

6. *Shivaji the Maratha his Life and Times*, by H. G. Rawlinson (Clarendon Press).

7. *Kashmir*, described by Sir Francis Younghusband (Black).





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